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REV. ALBERT M. DeLONG.

A Wolf *in* Sheep's Clothing



By

ALBERT M. DELONG

TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1905



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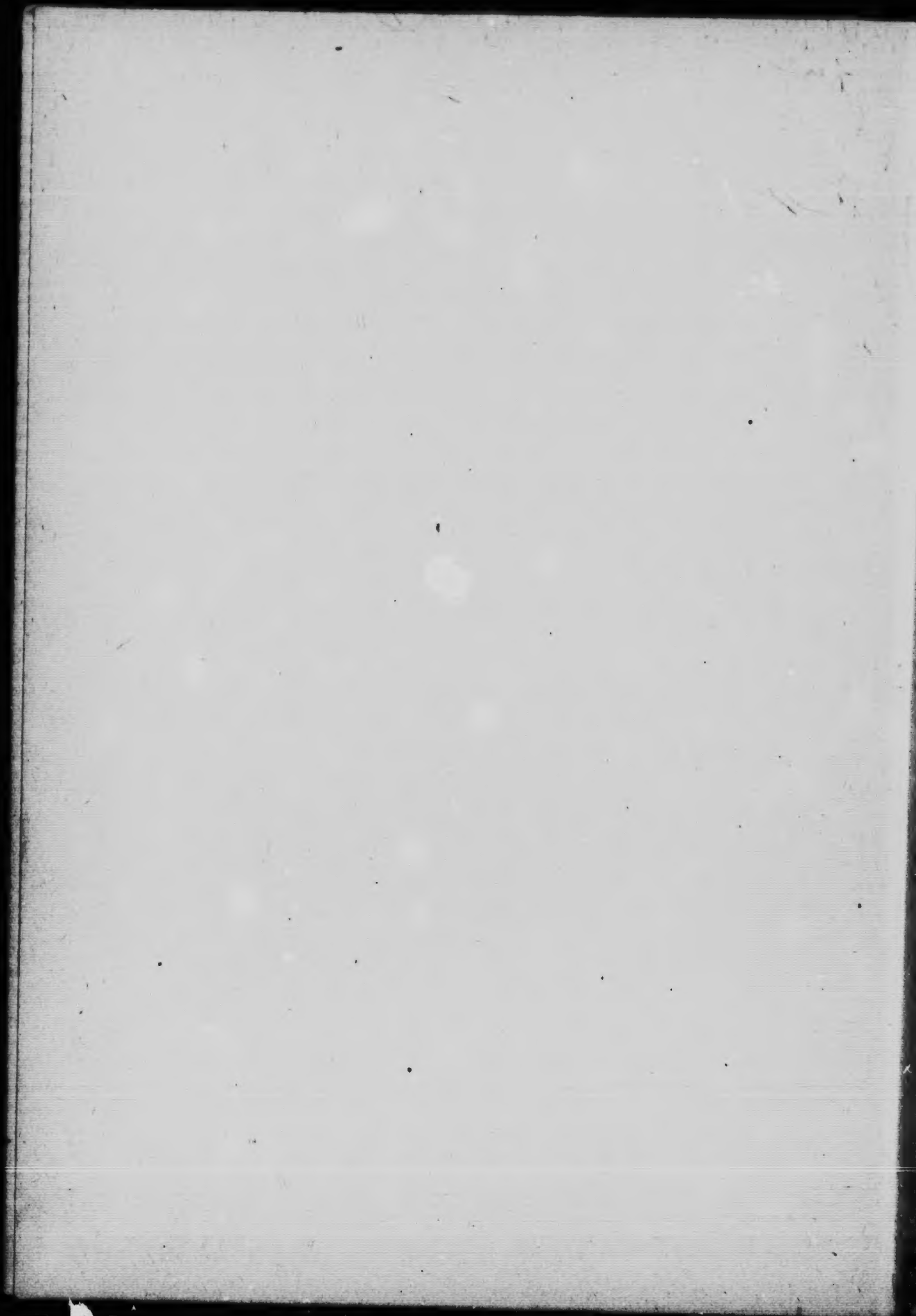
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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.	
INTRODUCTION	PAGE 5
CHAPTER II.	
THE SURPRISE	14
CHAPTER III.	
THE DEPARTURE AND FLIGHT	40
CHAPTER IV.	
THE EXPOSURE	60
CHAPTER V.	
THE RETURN AND WEDDING	88
CHAPTER VI.	
THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSORS IS HARD	95
CHAPTER VII.	
REPENTANCE	106
CHAPTER VIII.	
THE MEETING AND REUNION	119
CHAPTER IX.	
BUSINESS SUCCESS AND POSSIBILITIES	135
CHAPTER X.	
CONCLUSION	160



A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION.

The present narrative (for story it can hardly be called, as nearly every incident mentioned is based on some actual occurrence) was suggested by events that took place either under the writer's personal observation, or that were related to him by trustworthy witnesses.

It is put in its present form in the hope that while it may prove interesting reading it will also act as a warning to those who are indiscreet in their intimacy with the opposite sex, and that it will hold out a ray of hope and encouragement to the erring who would like to lead a better life.

In the Province of Quebec, located in the centre of a thriving farming community, is situated the ambitious, growing village of Roxburg, whose position on the line of one of the railways that connect the province

with the State of Maine, adds to its importance. This circumstance, coupled with the fact that every citizen is engaged in some useful and productive business, gives the place a semblance of importance which is far greater than its size or population would warrant.

At the time of our story, over twenty-five years ago, the village was a veritable hive of industry. Here were millers, merchants, masons, mechanics, blacksmiths, carriage makers, shoemakers, and all the minor callings in life, well represented. Here also were the high and public schools, where the youth of the village and surrounding community were fitted intellectually for the more active and responsible duties of life, and from which institutions have sprung men who have filled, and are now filling, very important positions.

Here, too, were churches belonging to several of the leading denominations, with the residences of their respective ministers. To counteract, as it were, the good work done by the above-named institutions, there were two hotels, which very industriously plied their business, not only in catering to the legitimate wants of the travelling public, but also, by luring all they could reach, to form, or perpetuate, the habit of dram-

drinking, which was proving such a snare and injury to many otherwise respectable citizens.

Having thus briefly described the place, it will next be in order to give a short description of some of the principal characters concerned in the narrative. First, because of the prominent part which he played, he being the central figure, was one of the clergymen of the place, to whom we will give the name of Tamden. In many respects he was a most remarkable man, and had his life been in harmony with his position, his talents and the confidence reposed in him, he might, in a few years, have filled one of the most important positions in the church of which he was a minister. His career up to the present had, to say the least, been somewhat chequered. When quite young he came to this country from London, England, a poor, lonely boy. Being unusually bright, he soon began to attract attention, and after some persuasion, was induced to study for the ministry. He passed the usual course of study, both literary and theological, in the shortest time possible, graduating a B.D. with honors.

But there were some things in spite of his cleverness that should have persuaded the authorities of the church to move carefully

in the matter of admitting candidates to the full honor and responsibility of the ministry. One event will be sufficient to illustrate this. While attending the college he formed the acquaintance of a young lady who was already engaged to be married to Dr. Rolf, one of the professors in the institution. She was handsome, cultured and winning, and the fact of her engagement had no influence with him. His motto was, "I will win her if I can," and, being very affable and persistent, it was not long before his attentions were listened to, and the professor notified that he might consider their engagement at an end, as hereafter his attentions would not be acceptable to her. In due course she was married to Tamden, amid many friendly congratulations. After a few months spent on a backwoods mission he received a call to the village already named, was duly appointed, and entered upon his duties with a diligence and zeal which won for him the admiration and praise of his flock and the public generally.

His sermons were original, and expressed in language which showed that the labor and money spent on his education was, from a literary standpoint, a good investment. Then his voice was of great compass, always delightful because of its fullness, sweetness,

and tone adapted to the sentiment under consideration ; and so, whether in sermon or prayer or sacred song, the congregation was held, as it were, by a magic spell, while his ministrations lasted.

But it was not on the Sabbath alone that he met the requirements of his calling. All through the week he was in and out among his people, like an angel of light and mercy, welcomed by old and young with demonstrations of joy.

He could speak words of tenderest sympathy to the suffering, give words of wise counsel to those in perplexity, and converse freely on all questions of public interest, and was not at times above joining in the frolics and pastimes of childhood. He was also very successful in looking after the temporal affairs of the church. The work on his charge, as well as the interests of the church in general, received his special attention, consequently everything prospered under his management. He was also a musician of no mean ability, and so exercised his gift in this direction as to bring his choir to the highest possible state of efficiency. Taking him all in all, therefore, his people felt that they had at last got a minister who was able to lead them in the right way to secure the best results.

The next person to whom we will introduce the reader, because of the important part that he and his family played, is Deacon Murks. The family consisted of the Deacon, his wife, two sons, and two daughters, all grown up. The Deacon was a very intelligent and agreeable man, somewhat past middle life, who had in his younger days travelled considerably, and had formed opinions on church matters not altogether in harmony with the views of the older and more conservative members of the church. Still he was, if not wealthy, at least what is termed "well off," and as he was liberally disposed, his unorthodoxy was no barrier to membership in said church. Their home was on a farm about four miles from the village of Roxburg, and was a model of neatness and comfort. A grove of evergreen trees served as a protection against the rude northern blasts of winter, and a shade from the burning rays of the sun in summer, where, when overheated and weary, they could always find a cool, restful retreat.

A few rods from the door was a beautiful fish-pond, formed by damming a small creek which ran through the farm, and where the speckled trout and silvery chub were always in waiting to gratify the angler's love for piscatory pastime.

Within the home there was every indication of refinement and culture ; large and costly paintings, representing historic persons and places of interest, adorned the walls, while the rich-toned piano was the most prominent feature of the parlor. Added to this there were books on almost every conceivable subject of interest, with magazines, papers and other periodicals bearing on the living questions of the day.

Of his family I will only mention the eldest daughter, Amy, who at this time was about twenty-five years of age. She was well educated, an accomplished musician, and had the faculty, possessed by few, of making herself agreeable, no matter what society she happened to be mingling with.

No wonder, then, that the pastor found frequent cause to visit such a home, occupied by such a family, especially as one of the churches under his care was just across the highway, opposite the Deacon's home, and it was often convenient for the pastor to call and consult him in the interests of the work in connection with the church. Nor is it to be wondered at when we remember the musical faculty of the pastor and Miss Amy, that they were often found together at the piano, their voices mingling in richest harmony and sweetest melody, as they sang to-

gether the latest and most popular productions in the world of music.

Dr. Loudon, a young physician of more than usual talent in his profession, is the next character to whom it is necessary to call attention. In his student days it was said of him that he was a good deal given to dissipation, it having cost his widowed mother a snug little farm to put him through college, but if this were true, he had now sobered down, and was making for himself a name that was daily raising him in the estimation of the public by his skill in the treatment of the various ills to which the flesh is heir. The reason for giving him this brief introduction to the reader is the fact that there was a rumor, no doubt well founded, that he was engaged to the young lady already described.

Still another character to introduce before we take up the relation of events which belong to the story. Mr. Price was a farmer, miller, postmaster, Justice of the Peace, and withal a deacon in the church of which Tamden was pastor. As a J. P., by his wise counsel and timely advice, he had averted many a lawsuit, and had been the means of reconciling neighbors who otherwise would have lived at enmity towards each other. As postmaster, he was affable

and obliging during office hours, but when the time for closing arrived would show no favor to either rich or poor. He was a very thrifty, enterprising citizen, as could be seen in the skill and energy which he displayed in the various departments of business under his control. Further, he was a very liberal supporter of his own church, and gave willingly of his means to all other Christian denominations that looked to him for help.

CHAPTER II.

THE SURPRISE.

It was Friday evening, about half-past eight o'clock ; the minister was in the church assisting the choir in the preparation of music for Easter time, which was drawing near, and they were having not only a pleasant, but profitable time. Mr. Tamden took special pains to remind them that while artistic precision was essential to the proper rendering of the theme, this did not constitute the true idea of sacred song, that the only true worship was that which had its rise in the heart, and which represented the emotions and feelings of the soul ; and no one who was present on that ever-memorable evening would ever have suspected that he could be a party to the revelations that are about to follow. But, while these things were going on in the church, a very different scene was being enacted in the parsonage, a scene which when made public was to not only throw a damper on his zeal and devotion, but also abruptly terminate his public labors for some time to come, and sever

those intimate and confidential relations which had hitherto subsisted between the pastor and his people.

His wife, having occasion to go into the study for some money needed, and which he told her she would find there, in passing his desk, saw an open note, written in a bold, legible hand, which attracted her attention, and which ran something as follows : "My dear Amy, the drops are working splendidly. Mary will soon be gone ; then we can take our fill of love." Now, though their relations had not been as confidential and happy all through their married life as they should have been, she had no idea matters were reaching the crisis that this note seemed to indicate. Recovering from her surprise, she read it again, this time with more thought and deliberation, and so rapidly did her mind work that she soon reached conclusions that in part at least explained many circumstances of the last few months that had up till now been an inexplicable mystery. She had been ailing for some time, and had been under the treatment of Dr. Loudon, but though he professed to understand her complaint and had pronounced it but trifling, and promised that the medicine which he prescribed would, in a short time, put her all right again, she was not in any way im-

proving, but rather growing worse day by day, until now she was feeling quite alarmed at her condition. Now she understood why her husband had been so particular to prepare her medicine himself, under the pretence that he was anxious that there should be no mistake. Now, too, she could understand the puzzled look of the doctor, who so often expressed his surprise that the medicine was not producing the results it usually did in such cases. Her husband had mixed the dose in order that he might at the same time mingle with it some other drug that would not only counteract the doctor's medicine, but also exert a debilitating influence that would finally undermine her constitution, and bring her to a premature grave.

But there was no time now for useless repining; the time had come when some decisive steps must be taken immediately. If she should stay with him another night and he by any means find out that she had discovered his secret villainy, she dare not think of the consequences. So she reasoned, and, if her premises were sound, her conclusions were no doubt correct.

Though life had not ordinarily much attraction for her, the instinct of self-preservation was strong, and alarmed for the safety of herself and the children,

she decided to leave the house at once. Her children were in bed sleeping in childish innocence of what was going on in the mother's head and heart, and under ordinary circumstances it would have looked like cruelty to disturb them; but an emergency had arisen which had to be met, and so, crushing for the moment the feelings of pity that at other times would have interfered with her purpose, she proceeded at once to the unpleasant task of arousing the little ones with the greatest possible haste. This is not always so easy of accomplishment, as anyone can testify who has any knowledge of child life and habits, especially during the first sleep after a day of out-door romping and play. However, the promise of a walk with mamma, and a visit to the postmaster's, finishing up with a stick of candy if they were real good, had the desired effect with the two elder ones, so, taking the babe in her arms, after dressing them quickly, and not forgetting the letter so full of mystery, she hastened to the home of the postmaster.

Her hurried rap was answered by the postmaster in person, who without any special formality admitted her. He was not a little surprised, however, to find out who it was at this late hour of the night, it being

about 9 o'clock, and to see that she was accompanied by her children, the baby in her arms, and the other two clinging timidly to her skirts ; while she, with pale features, tearful eyes, and hesitating step, seemed to have scarcely sufficient strength to enter the dwelling where she had always been made so welcome. Her confusion and agitation were only equalled by the surprised, enquiring look of the postmaster. He had always prided himself on being able to form some idea of the mental state and condition of others by their outward behavior, but in the present case, so sudden and great was his surprise, he gave it up, and appealed directly to the trembling creature before him.

To his enquiry as to what was wrong, her first answer was a deep-drawn sigh, accompanied by an almost hysterical sob, which, of course, did not relieve the perplexity of the situation. For some moments things remained in this state, when the spell was broken by one of the children looking up into her tearful eyes, and saying with childish lisp, "Wots 'oo tryin' for, ma?" Instead of speaking, she handed the postmaster the note that had been the cause of her late visit, and all the troubled behavior that accompanied it.

By this time the family of the postmaster were beginning to assemble, and were taking considerable interest in the strange and unusual conduct of the minister's wife, whose only answer to their enquiry as to what was the matter was a prolonged season of sobs and deep-drawn sighs. They did not have long to wait for the desired explanation, for Mr. Price after hastily perusing the note that had just been handed to him, passed it to his wife, who in turn showed it to the other members of the family, who stood near. As soon as they had all thus perused the contents of the note, Mr. Price broke the silence by exclaiming in surprise, while his manner and tone indicated the indignation by which he was agitated: "Well, who would have thought of this? What can the man mean anyway? Can it be possible that he meant to take your life by slow poisoning?"

With this idea all the family agreed, and in effect so expressed themselves.

Mrs. Tamden was now urged to be seated while they thought over the wisest and best course to take under the perplexing circumstances which surrounded them. "In the meantime," said Mr. Price, "you will remain with us over night, and we will consult with a few of the friends about it to-

morrow." "For," he continued, "if that note means anything, you are not sure of your life another day." "Now we can see," he went on to say, "why you have been growing weaker every day in spite of the doctor's assurance that you would soon be all right, as there was nothing seriously the matter with you. The doctor has no idea that the medicine that he has been preparing with such care has been adulterated, perhaps not given at all, but instead has been substituted by some debilitating drug that is slowly, but surely, undermining your health, destroying your constitution, and probably in a few weeks more would have done its work, and your children would have been left without a mother to love and care for them, while their father would have had the undeserved sympathy of his people and the public generally, and we all would have shed tears of undisguised sorrow."

Just at this point there came a violent rap at the door, which indicated that the caller was either in a hurry or greatly excited, and Mr. Price, in person, responded to it. This time it was the minister himself, evidently all unconscious of the developments of the last half-hour, who, after the usual salutation of "Good evening," asked somewhat hurriedly if Mrs. Tamden

was there, adding that Mary (the servant) had told him that this was where she was, and that as it was getting late he thought he would come over and walk home with her, also remarking that it must be something very urgent that could have brought her out at this time of the night, she being so much attached to her home, that it was seldom she could be induced to leave it in the daytime.

He did not seem to notice that he had not, as usual, been invited inside, as had always been the custom heretofore when he called; nor did there appear to be anything unusual in his demeanor, till Mr. Price had replied, "Yes; your wife is here, and intends not going back with you to-night, or in fact at any time; as she has made a discovery this evening that has convinced her that it will not be safe to trust herself any longer under the same roof with you."

At this the minister demanded, in a very excited manner, what they meant by interfering in this way with his domestic affairs, and in a most peremptory tone declared that he would see his wife, or to-morrow would know the reason why.

"Well," said Mr. Price, "seeing you demand an explanation, perhaps this will satisfy you," and proceeded to read to him

the note that had thrown his wife into such an excited condition.

At this point, the minister fairly lost his self-control, and burst into a tirade of coarse, abusive language, not fit to be transferred to the printed page, which was freely emphasized by profane and blasphemous interjections.

Mr. Price cautioned him to be careful of his demeanor, and very kindly reminded him that were it not for his position as minister of the Gospel, there would already have been steps taken to secure his arrest ; "but as it is," he went on, "we have concluded that it is the kindest and best course for all concerned, for you to quietly get away from here at the earliest possible moment, and save a great deal of unpleasant comment, both upon yourself and the church."

At this stage the minister, who seemed to have recovered the coolness and self-possession for which he was noted, broke out into an apparently indifferent laugh, as though the letter was as complete a surprise to him as it was to the rest of the company, as he exclaimed, "Well, this beats all I ever heard of. Surely you would not think me guilty of anything so dastardly mean as that note would suggest ? Has not my life since coming here fully met all the exacting require-

ments of one in my position? And will my wife now charge me with any conduct not becoming my relation to her as husband and provider? Who is the evil-designed person that would in such an underhanded manner come in and break up our home?" "Surely," he went on, "you will let me have one word of explanation with Mrs. Tamden, and not encourage her in such a whim as that the note is my production?"

But he found Mr. Price immovable, and just as stern and relentless when occasion seemed to demand it as he was kind and agreeable when attending to the ordinary duties of his business. Hitherto he had only studied him in his milder moods, when there was nothing to arouse his antagonism, and had found him one of the most yielding and obliging of men; but now where plainness and firmness were indispensable qualities, they proved to be as much the dominant traits of the postmaster's character, as were his kindness, urbanity and a desire to please under other circumstances. "No," he said to the minister with an emphasis that made him start, and almost tremble and cower before him, "you cannot see your wife to-night; and as to your denying your part in

this note, you will have to go where your writing is not so well known as in this office before you can make people believe anything of the kind. Since your coming here not a day has passed without your writing in some form passing through our hands, and no one at all familiar with your style would hesitate for one moment in declaring this an emanation of your pen.

"Besides you could not convince me, or anyone else, that a stranger could delude your wife, the servant girl, and the watchfulness of your Newfoundland dog, and, without a light, pass through three doors downstairs, then upstairs and through the hall to the study, deposit this note on the study table, retrace his steps, and not be detected in any of his movements.

"Circumstances are all against you, and if you are wise, you will save yourself and friends a good deal of trouble by quietly getting away at the first opportunity.

Upon hearing this, and seeing there was no hope for him in this direction, he gave way to a violent outburst of passion, in which he used language too shockingly profane to bear repeating. He denounced his wife in bitterest terms, declaring she never could be trusted, and that as far as he was concerned, he was glad

things had come to a head, as it had to be brought to a crisis sooner or later anyway, and this would put him in a position in which he could get a divorce, when he would marry the only one whom he really loved, and who was in every way more suitable to be his companion than the woman who was now seeking to effect his ruin. With this he started off, muttering threats of vengeance against his wife and all others who were standing by her in this the hour of her sore trial.

After his departure, Mr. Price asked Mrs. Tamden if she felt like giving a few words of explanation that would throw some light on a scene so dark to be understood as it at present appeared. At first she hesitated, but upon being assured that nothing but her interests and the interests of truth in general prompted the enquiry, she made a statement which in substance was as follows: In making this statement she took under review events and circumstances that had taken place some months ago, when there were rumors afloat that the minister was, to say the least, somewhat indiscreet in his conduct with Miss Amy. She had been told, for instance, that on the occasion of his preaching at the little church near the home of Miss Murks, that young lady would wait

at the door till he had greeted his flock as they stood around the stove or in the aisles, and then would take his offered arm, as, like a pair of lovers, they walked over the way to her father's house, often lagging behind the rest till they were the only ones to be seen. She had also been told of their being out driving together on several occasions, and also of their going off together after berries, in out of the way places, and not coming back till night. Such rumors and stories as these, coupled with his late home-coming when he was off in that direction, so wrought on her that she could endure it no longer, so one night, after putting her children to bed, she disguised herself by throwing a shawl over her head, and walked the whole way to the Deacon's home, about four miles, which place she reached without discovery, and as there was no one in sight, she proceeded at once to the parlor window and carefully looked through the partly-closed blinds, when, to her horror and disgust, she saw sitting side by side, her husband and Miss Amy, he holding her hand in his, while her head was partially reclining on his arm, as he whispered something into her ear that seemed to please her immensely. She waited no longer; she had seen enough; from this time forward no

rumor would surprise her, nor any damaging story be discredited by her. As silently as she had come she took her departure, her head dizzy with excitement, and her heart throbbing with emotion. As rapidly as she had come she retraced her steps, meeting no one by the way, reaching her home a little after eleven o'clock, having been about three hours in making the journey both ways. Nor did she reach home a moment too soon, for she had hardly time to put away her shawl, and look at the children, when she heard her husband drive into the yard.

If she was puzzled as to what she had better do when it was only rumors that disturbed her, what ought she to do now, after what her eyes had seen? Would she tell him what she had just witnessed? This might arouse his anger, and lead to an open rupture between him and his people, and perhaps destroy for life their prospects and those of their children. No, rather than do this she would endure on in silence, telling her troubles only into the ear of her loving Father above, who ever listens to the cry of His needy ones. And then she reasoned, "Perhaps I have not done all that I could to make him believe that there was no place where his company was so much prized as

at home." And so she resolved, that instead of showing him any resentment, she would treat him with greater demonstrations of affection than ever, and by this means win back the love which for the time being he seemed inclined to bestow on another. And so, bearing her weary burden all alone, as far as telling her suspicions and troubles to any earthly friend was concerned, she had toiled and struggled on, each day looking above for strength to endure in the spirit of the Master. But though she had borne thus silently and uncomplainingly, she felt this had largely to do with her sickness, and was sufficient of itself to undermine her health. This recital seemed to give her a measure of relief, which, when over, found vent in copious weeping.

Her story awakened the deepest sympathy on the part of the listeners, as they looked at each other in mute astonishment at the revelation to which they had just listened. It was to them as a bolt from a clear sky, and they looked to each other wondering which of them should break the unbearable silence which was beginning to be oppressive in its effects.

They did not have long to wait in suspense, as Mr. Price relieved the situation by encouraging her to be as cheerful as possible,

and remarking : "You still have your children to live for, and though you may not have a great deal of this world's wealth, you have a good name, which is better than riches, and though you have been with us but a little over a year, you have made many friends who will not desert you now in the hour of your need. We cannot do much for you to-night, but we will see what can be done in the morning towards getting you to your home in the city of Quebec, and we will send a note to your friends that will fully relieve you from any blame, and make it easier for you to make your way to their affection and sympathy. We would gladly have you make your home in our village, and no doubt your friends, when they become aware of the situation, would see to it that you were well looked after ; but we can easily see the complications you would have to meet if you stayed here, and if we suggest your departure, bear in mind, it is not because we have lost faith in, or respect for you, but simply because we think it would be better for you. You can go home, and only appear to the outsiders as being on a visit, and probably but very few will enquire anything about you, as in the city there is not that intimacy with other people's affairs that there is in the country."

She thanked them very kindly for their interest, but remarked that she did not grieve so much for herself as for her children, for this would follow them wherever they might go, and would be a barrier to their final success in life.

Mr. Price urged her to not take too gloomy a view of the situation, and reminded her that the mother had a good deal to say as to what the future of her boys was to be, and that with earnest, consecrated effort she might see them grow up to fill positions of honor and usefulness. "In the meantime," said Mr. Price, "you had better try and get a little rest, as you will need it before you get settled; and the sooner you compose yourself and gain control of your feelings the better."

After some persuasion she was prevailed upon to retire, that the weary body might have a few hours' rest, even though her disturbed state of mind might preclude the possibility of sleep. Here we will leave her and go back to the family of the postmaster, and see what they are planning for the future of Mrs. Tamden.

No sooner had Mrs. Tamden gone to her room than they began to ask what they should do. They all agreed, in the end, with Mr. Price, that it was better for her to go

to her friends, who it was said were well off, and would not find it a burden to take care of her till she could get something to do by which she could earn a living for herself and her children. They knew, of course, that her family were greatly incensed at her marrying Tamden, but there were indications of late, from the frequency of the letters passing through the post office, that a better feeling was growing up between them, and they had no doubt that when she went to them with the story of her unkind treatment, they would welcome her back and do what they could to help her.

"But," said Mr. Price, "we will have to do something by way of paying her passage to the city, for it is not likely she has any funds in her possession. He therefore suggested waiting on Dr. Loudon and Mr. Lett—men on whose judgment he could rely—and after explaining the situation, ask their advice as to the best course to pursue. Mr. Lett was about retiring for the night, but when told that he was wanted on urgent business at the postmaster's he at once dressed and hurried over to see what was the emergency. Dr. Loudon, when told that he was wanted at the postmaster's, without any further explanation, thinking he was wanted pro-

professionally, caught up his emergency case of instruments and medicines, and with all haste made his way to the place of rendezvous. His first question upon entering was, "Who is sick? and what seems to be the trouble?" "Thanks to a kind Providence," said Mr. Price, "we do not need you as a doctor to-night, so this trip will not add to your income, or help your reputation as a physician. We have called you for another purpose, and we hope to profit by your advice in another matter that requires careful thought and wise treatment."

"Why, what has happened now?" said the doctor, "that you have had to call on me at this unseasonable hour for advice? Has some knotty legal problem turned up that you, with your years of experience, cannot solve, that you wish to refer to me? If so, I fear you are making a mistake, as I never had anything to do with matters pertaining to the law."

"No," said Mr. Price, "if it were a question of law I should feel myself competent to deal with any ordinary case. No, the business in hand is of far more serious import than that which ordinarily comes under a magistrate's jurisdiction. It is a question concerning our minister. You know how greatly he is respected and beloved by all

classes, and how we have come to look on him as a model of perfection, both as a gentleman and a Christian. It will, therefore, be a great shock to you and to the public generally to be apprised of the fact that he has been neglecting his wife, and at the same time flirting with Miss Murks. Though rumors to this effect were rife last summer, you remember how we scoffed at the idea, and put the rumors down as the work of some malicious, idle brain. You did not take any stock in the reports, or you would not have continued your attentions to the same young lady ; and it is not at all probable that you have heard that this very night Mrs. Tamden found a letter addressed to this young lady, which discloses a plot, on his part at least, to poison his wife."

"I certainly am not prepared to believe any such a story," said the doctor, excitedly. "Why, I was as intimate with him as I could be with a brother ; we have been together a great deal since his coming here, and I have never seen anything in his behavior or conversation that was inconsistent with the character or behavior that belongs to a Christian minister. It will, therefore, take more than a mere assertion to convince me that there is not some mistake, and he the victim of some scandal-monger,

as many a good man has been before. I once referred to the rumors that were afloat while in conversation with Miss Murks, and she declared that she never saw anything in his conduct that was inconsistent with his standing as a minister of the Gospel, and that while there may have been conduct that to some suggested the idea of intimacy, their intimacy was never of a personal character, but was always directly connected with the welfare of the church, in which she was an untiring, zealous worker, and I have never discovered anything in her that would throw discredit on her frank and honest statement. I know," the doctor continued, "Mrs. Tamden has been very poorly of late, and her complaint presents some peculiarities which I do not fully understand; but, admitting this, it is not necessary to jump to the conclusion that poison has anything to do with it. Are not the most skilful specialists often deceived in their diagnosis? And do not post-mortem examinations often reveal complications that were not supposed to exist? And may not here be a case of that kind?"

Mr. Price listened to this somewhat lengthy speech without offering any interruption, though it was evident he was just waiting for an opportunity to convince the

doctor of the gravity of the situation ; so, taking the letter from his pocket, he handed it to the doctor, asking, as he did so, if he thought he could tell whose was the writing. "Most certainly," said the doctor, "and at first glance I should say that this is Tamden's writing, but what has that to do with the case ?"

"Read it," said Mr. Price, "and you will see that it may have some bearing on it after all."

The doctor, at this suggestion, began to ponder the contents of the note, and it would have been an interesting study for a physiognomist, as the emotions of surprise, disgust, and pent-up anger, followed each other in rapid succession, when the true state of affairs began to dawn on him. Clenching his hand nervously on the damaging, disturbing document, he spoke out in a loud tone, "Well, after all, it must be true, though I never could have believed it did I not hold in my hand the most convincing proof of his perfidy. And now," continued the doctor, "I think I can understand Mrs. Tamden's sickness better than I did an hour ago. Now it flashes across my mind, clear as noonday, the reason for Mrs. Tamden's continued ill-health. It comes to me like a flash that our minister's interest in the

study of poisons, and their effects on the human system, has a direct bearing on this case. All through the past summer, whenever we were together, which was quite often, he had some questions to ask on the subject of poisons, and I, never dreaming that he was likely to make any practical use of it, gave him all the information that I could on the questions that he asked me. So, while I have been giving his wife medicine to act as a tonic, he has been substituting some of those drugs, which, while leaving no direct trace in the system, so act on and lower the vitality that in a few months their persistent use would put the patient beyond the possibility of recovery. How fortunate that she made the discovery when she did ! Another week or two and it would have been too late. This note explains why my remedies had not a more satisfactory effect." After a moment the doctor resumed, "I suppose you will issue a warrant for his arrest, will you not ?"

"No," replied Mr. Price, "I can see where we might frighten him a good deal, if that were worth while, but you may depend upon it, he is a wily scoundrel, and it may cost more than it will come to, even if we do arrest him. What do you advise, Mr. Lett ?"

Mr. Lett, who, up to this time, had been giving the closest attention to what was passing, though he had not yet ventured a remark, answered very deliberately. "I would agree with you ; we have a difficult piece of work on our hands. Depend upon it, this plot has been laid with consummate cunning, and I should not be surprised if he made it appear that this letter is simply a plot of his wife to ruin him, because of her jealousy. Or he might make it appear that he wrote the letter only in fun, and might bring Amy Murks to prove that there were never any improper suggestions between them. And what proof have we to contradict him ? As for me, I believe he is the writer, but whether his plans were so diabolical as the letter would indicate, is not for us to say. I am not inclined to think he could be as black at heart as the letter makes out. However, it is well to be on the safe side, and I think you did right in keeping Mrs. Tamden here for the night."

Dr. Loudon here broke in and declared that, from what he knew of Mrs. Tamden's illness and the failure of his prescriptions to even relieve her symptoms, the letter could be taken at its full value, and it was certain what Tamden's designs were.

"Well," said Mr. Price, "it seems there is

but one opinion as to what we should do with him ; that is, let him get away from here with all possible speed the first thing in the morning. It will not do to have him disgrace our village and church any further by his presence. We will suffer enough as it is, and we cannot hide the matter. But we can show as a church that we thoroughly detest such conduct and will not tolerate anyone guilty of it."

"I do not think," said Mr. Lett, "that we will have any difficulty in disposing of him, now that this has come to light. Whether this was a made-up thing to frighten his wife and open up his way to leave, or was a real confession to Miss Murks, makes no difference. He has shrewdness enough to know that he's not wanted here any longer and, depend upon it, to-morrow morning will find his place vacant, or I'm no prophet."

"I think you are right," assented Mr. Price, "for whatever were his designs toward his wife or that young lady mixed up in the affair, it was, no doubt, his intention to leave us before long, without giving us even legal notice. But now we must arrange for Mrs. Tamden and the children to be sent to her mother, who, I am told, is well off, and will not feel the burden of tak-

ing care of her own daughter and grandchildren. It will only take about ten dollars to send them there, and I will go five if you will go the other five, and settle it without mention to the public. What do you say?"

"Agreed," said they both in almost the same breath, "that is the better way."

"And now," continued Dr. Loudon, "will you see that Mrs. Tamden and the children are taken to the train in the morning? Your horse is not as busy as mine." To which Mr. Price replied, "All right, doctor. I was expecting to do that anyway."

Having thus adjusted matters they bade each other good-night, anxiously wondering what new developments there would be in the morning, or what new complications would arise.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEPARTURE AND FLIGHT.

The next morning all were astir at a very early hour at Mr. Price's, for, except by the children, there had been but little sleep during the night. The poor, heart-broken wife had spent the long hours planning and wondering what she should do, even when she reached her home, for though she did not doubt there would be a welcome for herself and children, she was not at all contented to be so dependent.

At the time of her marriage, the opinion had been freely expressed, that she had not done the right thing in breaking off her engagement to the worthy professor, and many friends bitterly added, "She'll regret it yet." To have to go back now, and admit that their worst fears were more than realized, was almost too much for her haughty spirit to endure.

However, there was nothing else for her just now, so after a severe mental struggle she resolved to be honest, go home and tell the whole truth, and ask for shelter till she

could get some employment by which she could earn a livelihood for herself and the children.

When, therefore, the call came in the morning, telling her it was time to get ready for the train, she was up and dressed and had the children nearly ready as well.

The children seemed fully to appreciate the delicacies of that breakfast. As for Mrs. Tamden, her heart was too full to allow her to more than taste the tempting dainties. In their innocence and glee, the little ones had no realization of the gravity of the situation, so busied themselves with asking questions and making quaint remarks which, in spite of the sadness, would provoke a smile. The minister's kindness to his children was shown when one said, "I wonder if papa knows we's having breakfast at Mr. Price's?" another, "What did we come here for?" And the youngest, a little toddler of two and a half years, cried out in a fretful tone, "I wants to see my pa."

In due time the meal was finished and preparations were made for the departure. Of course, most of their clothing was at the parsonage and Mrs. Tamden did not dare to return for it while her husband was there. She believed he would stay in the house until he was certain she was really not com-

ing back. However, her friends supplied her with some necessary articles, promising to go to the parsonage and pack up the remainder of her own and the children's clothing and send them to Quebec by express soon.

While these arrangements were being made in the dining-room, there came a violent rap at the door, which was responded to by Mr. Price. To his surprise, he beheld the minister, his face flushed and his whole body betraying the most violent agitation.

"I have come over to see if my wife is coming home or not," he broke out; "I think she has carried the matter quite far enough. I am willing to acknowledge," he went on in a milder tone, "that I have not been as attentive to her as I should have been, but I will solemnly promise that, if she will return, I will do all in my power to undo the wrong she has suffered on my account. Will you kindly tell her this for me? And also say how sorry I am that this misunderstanding should have occurred."

"No, sir," replied Mr. Price firmly, to the shamefaced penitent, "I will tell her nothing of the kind. I thought I gave you to understand last night the decision she had come to, and now I repeat it, she does not intend seeing you again. I also have a word

of advice for you. A few of the officials were called in last night to discuss this matter, and, while we could see a chance to make out a very grave case against you, we decided that, if you would quietly and quickly leave, we would not interfere; but if you persist in remaining, after what has come to light, it will be my duty as magistrate to issue a warrant for your arrest. Now, sir, take your choice."

Upon hearing this, Mr. Tamden, who had been nervously biting his lip, gave vent to his pent-up rage in a volley of oaths and curses too horrible to be transferred to paper. Then, suddenly turning away he muttered that it was "a contemptible conspiracy," but it was "a long lane that had no turning," and he would "be even with the whole of them yet."

No sooner had he taken his departure than the horse and sleigh came up to take Mrs. Tamden and children to the station, but a short distance away. As the family gathered round to bid her an affectionate farewell, wish her "God-speed," and make her promise to write from Quebec, Mr. Price handed her the ten dollars so thoughtfully provided the night before. In great haste they drove through the village street, allowing poor Mrs. Tamden little time for a last

sad look at the place she had come to about a year ago so full of hope and cheer. Now, as she realized the change, she could almost wish she had not found the letter, but had gone on taking the medicine even though it had cost her her life. She might at least have died and never known but that for her he had some genuine affection. Now, she could never have her confidence restored, and she must ever regard him as her would-be murderer.

At this the children disturbed her reverie by asking, "Where's we goin', ma?" She tried to reply cheerfully, "To Quebec, to see grandma."

"But," one objects, "why don't papa come, too? I doesn't like to go alone wifout him."

Luckily for the mother, their attention was diverted by the objects at the station, so no reply was looked for.

Her fears lest she should arouse curiosity were calmed by the absence of any familiar faces, there being but two strangers on the platform. Her sympathizing friend, Mr. Lett, appeared in time to buy her ticket and see them all safely on the train. After expressing his sorrow at what had taken place, he spoke a few words of encouragement, hoped she would be kindly received by

her friends, bade her a hearty good-bye, and left her.

On board the train was a Scotchman who, though not interested in the conversation that had just passed, was impressed with the name of the lady. Being quite well acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Tamden, of Roxburg, he was led to observe Mrs. Tamden as doubtless the wife of his friend, and noticed how sad and pensive she seemed, all unheeding the prattle and frolic of the children.

Let us return to the parsonage and see how matters are going on there. The minister, finding that his attempts to see his wife were fruitless, rushed back to his home, ordered the servant to get him a cup of tea and an egg as quickly as possible, ran to the stable, fed and harnessed his horse, came back, crowded some things hurriedly into a trunk, took his hasty breakfast, brought his horse to the door, threw the trunk into the rig, told the servant she might go, as she would be needed no longer, called his dog (a magnificent Newfoundland) to follow him, and off he started at a very rapid rate.

Passing out of the village, he stopped at the hotel near the station, and enquired if his wife were there. Being informed to the contrary, he asked for a glass of brandy.

With the air of a man who had done something similar on former occasions, he filled the tumbler from the bottle handed to him, put it to his lips and drained it of its contents. Ordering a bottle of brandy, which he put into his breast pocket, he jumped to his cutter and urged his horse to its topmost speed, till he was out of sight over the hills.

Now, it seemed that the bartender was not at all surprised at this (though it is generally supposed, that if any class is to set an example of sobriety and abstinence from the use of intoxicants, it is the ministry). Though he never had taken a glass at the bar before, it is supposed from the bottles bought that he must have been more or less under the influence of liquor most of the time. Now, as Mr. Tamden passed from the room, the bartender remarked to a bystander that he guessed his reverence had a long, cold drive before him, from the good drink of brandy he had just taken.

But we needs must hurry, if we follow our hero as he speeds a couple of miles into the country to the residence of Abel Carter, an uncle of Miss Murks, and at whose place she was visiting. Immediately on his arrival he asked to see Miss Murks, for whom he said he had an important message from her

home. On her appearance, Mr. Tamden greeted her with his familiar, "Good morning, Amy. I have rather sad news for you or I would not have disturbed you at this early hour. Your mother," he went on, "is quite poorly—I might say, very ill, from cold, and other complications have set in, making it necessary that she have special care, so they have sent me to bring you home; and as she may need you for some time, she says you had better bring all your things along. Your aunt will, I am sure, under the circumstances, excuse this sudden leave-taking."

"Most certainly," said Mrs. Carter, "while we are disappointed in her short visit, we realize that her first duty is to her mother. I only hope you will find her better than when Mr. Tamden left. But come, my dear, I see Mr. Tamden is getting impatient. I suppose," she continued, to that gentleman, as Amy left the room, "that you are so used to making every moment count that your conscience condemns you for any time wasted in idle conversation." Mr. Tamden very graciously replied that he could not term their present talk as "idle," and while Miss Murks was busy packing her valise he continued his conversation with the family.

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

"How much farther is it," he asked of Mr. Carter, "if I should go around by the lake to Miss Amy's home?"

"About six miles," Mr. Carter answered.

"Well, in that case, I think I shall go that way. I have a couple of families living along there whom I have never called on yet, and if I just look in and say 'Good morning' in passing, it will let them see that they are not forgotten. I can promise them a longer visit some time in the near future. My beast is very fast, the roads are good, and the morning air is so keen and bracing, it will only take about half an hour longer than to return straight from here. They are not expecting us till noon anyway. I am so glad to be able to attend to this matter for Mr. Murks. He is such a kind man himself, and has laid me under obligation to him so often, that I am happy to do anything to repay him.

"Then, Mrs. Murks, too, is the very soul of kindness and sisterly affection. How we are ever to show our gratitude is more than I can imagine. When Mrs. Tamden was so poorly last fall, she called to see her several times, and always brought some delicacy with her to tempt my wife's appetite. Besides, her words were so full of cheer that I feel it is to her kindly

visits and attention my dear wife is in a large measure indebted for the degree of health she enjoys."

"You will excuse my forgetfulness, Mr. Tamden," said Mrs. Carter, "but how is your wife at present? I thought as I looked at her last Sunday in church that she must yet be far from well. I am afraid the ladies around have not shown her as much practical sympathy and help as we might have done. And I fear we have expected more from her than we had a right to, considering her poor health generally, and the extra burdens she has to bear because of her position."

"Oh," returned the minister, "she is pretty well for her—in fact, a great deal better than she appears to be. You know there are some people like that. They are always delicate and sickly looking, yet they can do more work and stand more fatigue than some who appear to be healthier and stronger. Now, Mrs. Tamden is one of that kind. She is capable of wonderful endurance when circumstances require it. I often wonder how she gets through with as much work as she does. But it is always the way with her. She is so attentive to me that I sometimes feel condemned for allowing her to do so much. There is so much that I

gladly could and would do to relieve her, if she would give me the slightest hint that she would like my help."

"We were very fortunate," he continued, "in getting a good girl. We find Jane all that one could wish, and that takes such a responsibility from my wife's shoulders."

By this time, Miss Murks was ready, valise in hand, to take her place in the cutter, which, you may have imagined, was pretty full already with the minister and his trunk. While he was explaining that the trunk belonged to a friend along the road and that he had not thought of the inconvenience till he had come too far to turn back with it, he was all the time trying to stow away the extra valise. After doing his best he apologized for her discomfort, adding cheerfully: "However, we shall not be long on the way, as Bess does not waste any time on the road."

Bess, hearing her name spoken, darted off with her passengers, who were still moving and shifting, trying to arrange themselves a little more comfortably. The Carter family responded to the hasty "Good-bye," and returned to the interior of the house.

When the travellers reached the main road, instead of turning towards the village, as his companion expected he would, Mr. Tam-

den reined his horse in the opposite direction. Amy, not having heard the conversation about the road home, exclaimed, "Why, this is not the way home!"

"I know it," he replied, "but just keep quiet and I'll explain it all. You remember the talks we have had about my wife's health,—how I told you of her gradually growing weaker, and how I had often heard her wish she might die that she might get away from the annoyances she was suffering, partly on account of her weak health, but chiefly because she was jealous of you? Well, I wrote a note yesterday purporting to be addressed to you, and left it where she would be sure to see it. Then, for fear she might not get it, I told her where she could get some money that she wanted. Well, in the note, I had stated that the drops were working all right, and that Mary would soon be gone. Of course, I really had nothing very serious in contemplation, but I had been so annoyed by her jealousy and her constant complainings, that I was almost desperate when I wrote it. I expected, of course, that she would ask me what it meant, and perhaps scold a little. But I thought I would laugh her out of it as I had often done before when she was in a pet. But this time, instead of doing as I had

planned, what did she do but run to Mr. Price's with the children and show him the letter. Now, the whole village is aroused, and I am put down as trying to poison my wife, and because your name is mentioned in the note you are as deeply in it as I."

"Why, Mr. Tamden," she exclaimed, with pent-up excitement, while her face was blanched with horror, "how could you be so thoughtless? You have not only ruined your own reputation, but mine, too. What-ever shall we do about it? I never thought it would come to this when I suffered those little attentions that you forced upon me. Better a hundred times over we had never met than have this shameful state of things come about. But what are you going to do now? Where are you driving me to, anyway?"

"Why," he replied, "I am sure you don't ever want to be known around the old place again after this exposure; so the only thing left for us is to get where we are not known as soon as possible. I have left everything but what you see and a couple of cheques that will amount to a thousand dollars or so. We will get them cashed at the bank at Saxon, and when I sell the horse and rig we'll have quite a respectable sum. Now," he interposed, as he fancied

his companion was about to raise objections, "we may as well make the best we can out of this blunder. As I have said, there's no manner of use in your ever thinking of going back to your home again, as the whole community will be down on you ; so you will just have to do the next best thing and start west with me by the first train. We will go to the States, where the public conscience is not so sensitive on the divorce question as it is here."

"But," she began pleadingly, "is there no other way of meeting the trouble than by running off in this disgraceful way? Wouldn't it be far better to go back and confess that we have not behaved as prudently as we should? I am willing to take my full share of the blame, if that will help matters any. It does seem too bad to have all your fine hopes so suddenly dashed to the ground—and both our names trailed through the dust by the gossiping public. Just think of what your poor wife must suffer through it all ! I can't help feeling sorry for her even in my own trouble and disgrace. You have preached that we should confess our faults ; why not now put it into practice ? Besides, our running off like this will only confirm the suspicions, and we will be put down as combining to shorten your wife's life when

you know"—she almost shrieked in her desperate excitement—"and high heaven knows that there is nothing to it so far as I am concerned. If I was thoughtless and unwise in my conduct with you, it was only because I had confidence in you as a minister of the Gospel. I will not consent to run off and leave such a scandal without making at least one honest effort to put things right."

In her earnestness she would have snatched the reins and turned the horse homeward, but Mr. Tamden very collectedly warded her off and replied: "Oh, all this is very fine as sentiment, but we have got beyond that now. That unfortunate note in the hands of Mr. Price will stand against us no matter how we try to fix things up. Let me tell you, it may be serious to run away, but I warrant it will be a great deal more serious for us to go back and face the result. In short—I may as well tell you plainly—you have to go with me, and we will share the consequences together. We have reached a point where sentiment and protestations of innocence can very well be dispensed with. If you are willing to come along peaceably, all right,—if not," he exclaimed with terrifying earnestness, "I have come prepared to compel submission on your part! So you may take your choice."

Receiving no response, he went on : "Now, I'll give you an outline of what I propose. My wife is not known in either Limeburg or Saxon, and as I have a couple of cheques requiring her signature, you will have to sign 'Mrs. Tamden' in her stead."

Pale with excitement and nerved beyond control, she burst forth : "But you surely would not ask me to be guilty of lying and forgery to add to the other disgrace ? You want me to break my poor mother's heart by making her believe I have forgotten all her advice and have given myself to commit all manner of evil."

Mr. Tamden spoke impatiently : "I thought I told you that this is no time for sentiment. What have we to do in this emergency with these childish notions of right or wrong ? The right thing for us now is to get away from this affair as fast and as far as we can. There are times, you know, when that thing you call conscience has to be left out of consideration altogether, and we have to be governed by the exigencies of the moment, and, depend upon it, if any ever reached that point, we have reached it now. Once more, I warn you to keep your sentiment and your conscience for your own private meditations, if you will, but do not again intrude them upon me."

"Prompt, decided action is all that remains to us now, and, as I said before, I am prepared to insist on it in the most unmistakable manner. My plan is this : You will go to the hotel at Limeburg, keeping your veil closely drawn, while I dispose of the horse. We will then take the train for Saxon, go to the bank to have the cheques cashed, and take the first train for Newtonville, Vermont. In the meantime we can make further plans. If the trains are on time we can be away before any from the village can reach here.

"I know there are men there who will leave no stone unturned to try to intercept us, but, if I know anything about them, they will be too long making up their minds to be able to stop us before we get across the border."

"I see," she admitted, scornfully, "you have all our plans made, and I am in your power. Were it not that life is sweet, I would say, 'Do your worst ; carry out your threat as quickly as possible.' But of two evils I choose what seems, for you, the lesser, and though it pains me to consent, I must."

During this conversation they had covered several miles, at a most desperate rate. Suddenly a bolt fell out and one end of the crossbar dropped to the ground. It happened

that a house stood near by, so Mr. Tamden held up his foaming beast while he rushed to the door to enquire for a bolt. To explain his haste, he added, "I want to catch the train at Coate. It had just moved out as we drove to our station, but as it usually stops a half or three-quarters of an hour at Coate, I thought we might overtake it by hurrying. I must be there in time to help my wife on the train; it is her last chance of seeing her mother alive."

By this time the man of the house had found a bolt which fitted exactly, and so, in less than five minutes after the break-down, they were off again as fast as before.

* * * * *

The railroad had but lately been built between the city of Saxon and the village of Roxburg, when our story began. Consequently the road-bed was not in perfect order, and travel was slow, which, with the necessary stops, made the journey as slow as with the average roadster.

On this particular morning the train proceeded with more than usual deliberation. About ten miles from home, as they approached a crossing, one of the children looked out of the window at a horse and cutter with two occupants, driving furiously.

In excited glee, he shouted : "Oh, there's papa coming !"

"Yes," added another, "and he's brought Watch to mind the cutter."

The aforementioned gentleman passenger thought it strange that the mother made no reply to her children, but they soon lost sight of the cutter, and the incident was forgotten by the stranger till subsequent events recalled it.

The train reached Saxon in time to connect with the Grand Trunk for Quebec, so the passengers were separated.

In the meantime the fugitives reached Limeburg, where Miss Murks was shown to a room in the best hotel, while Mr. Tamden hastened to find a purchaser for his horse and cutter. Nor had he far nor long to look. As he offered the outfit, with the dog thrown in, for seventy-five dollars, the hotel keeper gladly accepted the offer.

He made the excuse for selling, that his wife was going to her sick mother and, as he was a little short of funds, he thought the money would be of more value just now than the objects sold. Receiving his cash, he had their baggage transferred to the station in time to catch the train for Saxon, a few miles off.

Arrived there, they hastened to the bank,

where by Miss Murks personating Mrs. Tamden, they had no difficulty in getting the cheques cashed. Fortunately for their plans at the present crisis, the train was late enough to give them time to buy tickets and check their baggage for Newtonville. Had that train been on time, they had had to wait twelve hours, and thus afford their pursuers ample time to overtake them.

As it was, however, the train was too far away to be signalled when those in pursuit came to the city, so the fugitives were allowed, for the time being, to escape.

Now, no doubt, Mr. Tamden felt he had Amy entirely in his power.

Sitting beside her he tried to be agreeable and to engage her in conversation. But the conductor was observant enough to notice that she refused to answer his questions and repelled all his advances, while she sat gazing absent-mindedly through the car window. Several deeply-drawn sighs betrayed her emotions.

While they are on the journey, let us return to Roxburg and watch the proceedings of others. This will very fittingly form the thought of our next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXPOSURE.

On this beautiful Saturday morning the village was astir as usual, and already several curious ones were expressing their surprise at seeing the minister start off so early—"and at such a rapid rate!"—"and taking his trunk along, too!" Some said he must be going on a journey, and then they wondered why he should start off in this way, while they were sure they had seen Mr. Price taking Mrs. Tamden and the children to the train.

But they were not kept long in suspense. Mr. Price thought it best to tell the matter just as it was, since it all must come to light some day, and nothing could be gained by silence. As soon, therefore, as he had fulfilled his engagement in getting Mrs. Tamden to the station, he came back, only to learn (as had been expected) that Mr. Tamden had gone too.

Having ascertained the direction in which he started, and knowing that Miss Murks was visiting her uncle, on that same road, it

was quite natural to conclude that Mr. Tamden had purposed persuading her to elope with him. Mr. Price, therefore, dispatched a messenger to ascertain whether or not his suspicions were well founded.

In less than half an hour the messenger returned with the report that Mr. Tamden had called for Amy about half an hour earlier, giving as his reason that her mother was quite sick and wanted her home at once. In a few words the messenger explained to Mr. Carter the state of affairs at the village, which gave that man an insight into human nature that he had never had before.

As soon as Mr. Price's suspicions had received this confirmation he sent the messenger at full speed to Mr. Murks', with the not-very-comforting news that the minister and their daughter had "run away together," as the boy put it, "after trying to poison his life."

Such startling news as this was, of course, too much for their acceptance without further proof. Mr. Murks, therefore, declared it must be a hoax, and Mrs. Murks was sure Amy would never be guilty of anything so base and mean.

They decided that there must be some mystery in connection with the affair that it would be worth their while to enquire

into more fully. Mr. Murks and his eldest son, George, therefore, soon started for the scene of the mysterious proceedings.

Nor did they lose any time on the way, for, though they both professed that they didn't believe there was anything to it, they had such confidence in Mr. Price each had his secret misgivings that there might be some truth in it after all.

While they were on their way, Mr. Price called on Mr. McCallum, a merchant in the village, who had at least a large financial interest in the absconding clergyman. During the year he had given the latter credit for over five hundred dollars. The news of the morning put him so on his mettle that he declared at once that whether he got his money out of the man or not, he would "have the satisfaction of spoiling his little game."

The merchant confessed that it was nothing more than he had expected. He had never mentioned his dislikes to anyone because, not belonging to their church, he feared his friends would think him bigoted. Mrs. McCallum, moreover, was a member of Mr. Tamden's church and thought a great deal of him—which was another reason why he kept his thoughts to himself.

"I expected as much," he repeated. "For the whole year I've thought his religion was just a 'put on,' but I declare I hardly thought he'd be found out just this way."

On Mr. Murks' arrival, it did not take Mr. Price long to let the anxious father and brother see just how matters were, and to convince them that their fears were fully realized—that Mr. Tamden had really taken Amy away with him.

Immediately the question arose, "What is to be done?"

"I think we'd better follow them," suggested the merchant. "I have a horse in the stable that can take us to Saxon in about two hours and a half—and they can hardly get away on the train before that."

Mr. Murks was all excitement and hoped "they might hinder Amy from going any farther with him, and force Mr. Tamden to hand over one or both of the cheques that belong to the church—that he had no right to."

In all haste George Murks prepared to send his father and Mr. McCallum to Saxon. Feeling the responsibility resting on him and longing for revenge, the driver urged the horse forward to the utmost possible speed, as he cracked the whip, tightened the

reins and shouted 'G'lang!' to the already too-willing animal.

When they reached Coate, they learned, upon enquiry, that the object of their pursuit was at least one hour and a half in advance of them, and that he was driving most furiously as he passed through.

Messrs. Howe and Shaw, carriage makers, learning of Mr. Tamden's sudden departure, bethought themselves of some of his big debts to them, and hurriedly set out to overtake him. After these again, came Dr. Loudon and George Murks, driving the doctor's horse—Mr. Murks holding the reins and the doctor using the whip liberally. Both were determined, if possible, to catch the fugitives.

In their purpose, all were disappointed. The first two reached Limeburg just in time to see the train moving away from the station. Hastening to Saxon, they discovered the facts already stated in reference to getting the cheques cashed. On enquiring at the railway station, they learned that a man answering to their description had bought two tickets for Newtonville.

Armed with these facts, they telegraphed ahead to the police at Newtonville, telling them to arrest and detain the parties they described, till they could overtake them.

As there came no train till noon the next day, they determined to drive through. So, after feeding their horse and giving it a short rest, they started on their long, lonely drive of forty miles or more, over the mountain, through the forest,—in many places having to track out their own road through the recently-fallen snow. But they felt that their errand was an urgent one. The father was doubly anxious to overtake his erring daughter and persuade her, if possible, to return home, where she would be gladly welcomed, forgiven, and helped to bury the shame of the past. The merchant was hoping to obtain his five hundred dollars, the loss of which would mean a gap in his business that would take him some time to fill.

So, from three o'clock in the afternoon till nearly midnight, they toiled on, through the falling snow and gathering darkness, enquiring their way of each one they chanced to meet, and at the dwellings along the way, till the last traveller had passed them and the last light had gone out in the farm-houses.

Can you imagine their relief as they saw before them the lights of Newtonville, and realized that in a few minutes they should

be brought face to face with the runaway pair ?

When they reached the town, they stabled the tired horse and enquired for the police station, where they expected to meet their man. From there they were directed to the leading hotel, where, they were told, they would find him safely guarded with his lady companion. The hotel being reached and the authorities being satisfied that these were the parties who had ordered the detention of the prisoners, the two elderly men were shown into the presence of Mrs. Tamden.

The meeting, as you may imagine, was anything but a pleasant one. The last time the minister had met the other men, they were on the most friendly terms ; now they eyed each other in a most suspicious manner. Then, they had met and parted with a hearty handshake, and words of kindly cheer ; now their gaze was repulsive and the meeting awkward in the extreme. This repugnance expressed itself even while going through the customary formal marks of recognition.

The silence following the first greeting was oppressive, as neither side was inclined to offer or ask any reason for this meeting under such peculiar circumstances and at such an unseemly hour of the night.

At length Mr. Tamden grew composed and boldly burst forth, "Well, gentlemen, I suppose it is by your authority I have been detained and prevented from continuing my journey, and now I demand of you on what grounds you have kept me here? I want you to understand that it is no light matter to stop a traveller and not even hint at the reason."

This was a point the pursuers had not, in their haste, considered. But when they came to look the matter fairly in the face they saw the weakness of their case, and were at a loss for an answer. One had been prompted by the interests of his business; the other by those of home. The merchant could do no more than allude to the fact that Mr. Tamden was leaving a debt of five hundred dollars, while Mr. Murks spoke of the culprit's heartlessness, first in enticing his daughter away from home, and secondly, in leaving Mrs. Tamden, his patient, faithful wife, and his affectionate little ones.

"And besides that," he added, "see the disgrace you are bringing on the church and the cause of religion."

But Mr. Tamden met the accusations with, "You needn't try to come around me with any of your pious cant. I have no time

for any such nonsense and, I assure you, I am in no humor to be trifled with. As far as my relations with your daughter are concerned, I fancy we can settle that between us. She is of age, and so, at full liberty to choose for herself. As to the church I suppose it is fully competent to look after its own interests and will probably survive the weakness of one of its members. If it has not vitality enough for that, so much the worse for the church.

"I now demand your authority for detaining me. Have you a warrant for my arrest? Or what is the legal charge for which you thwart my plans? If you can't produce some document showing your reasons, the tables may possibly turn, and it may be shown that yours is the indictable offence. I will not be hard on you, gentlemen, and will add that I admire your zeal for the sacredness of your homes, the dignity of the church, and what has probably as much to do with it as anything else, the integrity of your business. But, really, all these considerations have nothing to do with my legal standing, as this gentleman (turning to the officer who was keeping watch over him) will agree; so, without any further parley, I wish you to understand I intend to proceed on my journey. It would

serve you right," he muttered, "if I made you pay very smartly for falsely arresting me."

The officer, appealed to, replied that unless they could produce something more tangible than they seemed at present to possess, they would have to allow him to proceed. He explained that they should have had papers made out for his arrest, stating his crime, and had them duly signed by some competent officer. In such case, the authorities there would have given the matter all the attention it demanded.

"But, gentlemen," he remarked sympathetically, "as it now stands, according to the law he is an innocent man, and as such I can only tell him he is at liberty to go as soon as it suits his convenience. Of course this will not prevent your putting the case in legal form, when you will find no trouble in having it attended to."

Hearing this, Mr. Tamden turned to his would-be detainers with his most sarcastic and provoking smile, and extending his hand said, "Good-bye, gentlemen! I am sorry you have given yourselves the trouble of coming all this distance with no outcome but finding me safely on my journey, and about to continue, with or without your leave." Leaving his visitors in mute dis-

appointment, his determined steps bore him from their presence.

It was hard for Mr. McCallum to see his man leave so coolly in possession of his five hundred dollars, and he powerless to obtain even one dollar of it. "Well," he suggested, "I suppose we may go back the way we came. We might have known better than to take this drive, when we knew his cunning would have calculated all these chances before he made the venture. I have learned not to trust any man because of his cloth, for dress is no guarantee of character.

Mr. Murks admitted that as far as the money was concerned, their trip had been a failure. "But," he added feelingly, "if I might see Amy, perhaps I could reason with her not to carry this madness any further. She can't have lost all love for her father and home. I'm going to do my best to have a talk with her."

Upon enquiry he found that though the pair had registered at Mr. Umberton and wife, from Maine, she had insisted on private apartments, whither Mr. Murks was directed after explaining the circumstances to the landlord.

Through the fan-light he saw that her light was still burning, and on rapping firmly, he was asked, "Who's there?"

"It's father, Amy. May I come in?"

"Oh, yes, if you're alone," came the response, and on his assurance, she hastily opened the door.

Her eyes were red and her cheeks bore traces of recent tears, while she hung her head in evident shame and confusion. How she longed to embrace that father whom she had left in such affectionate confidence on leaving home for her uncle's a few days before. But now she felt that she had, by her rash act, forfeited her claim to that confidence and affection, though secretly she knew she was more the victim of unfortunate circumstances than one guilty of any intentional criminal conduct.

Almost immediately, her father, with deep emotion, broke the silence.

"Oh, my dear Amy, you can't tell the grief you have caused us,—you, our eldest-born and our pride and hope!—And we tried to be so careful in bringing you up, too!—To think that it must all end like this! Oh, I cannot bear it! What infatuation has got possession of you anyway, to let you break our hearts and disgrace us?"

"Oh, father!" she sobbed, "if you only knew all you would not think so harshly of me. I am as much surprised at this turn of affairs as you are. If

any one had told me twenty-four hours ago what was likely to happen, I would have been indignant beyond expression. When you hear the whole story you will not blame me altogether for the step I have taken."

"I'll be only too glad to listen to your story," replied the father; "for, I confess, till I hear it I can't see how you're going to soften the matter."

"I don't blame you, father," she exclaimed, trying to control her emotions, "for thinking hard of me, although considering all the circumstances brought to light yesterday, and what happened since, this seemed the only way open to me."

"Well," urged Mr. Murks, "I'll try to be patient and listen to what you have to say. Go on."

Amy was quite her natural, earnest self again, as she talked with her father.

"You remember, father, how heartily we all welcomed Mr. Tamden to our home, and how pleased we have been that he seemed to enjoy our society, and how fond he was of music. It was only for that reason that I used to play his accompaniments while he sang. You know, too, how fond we both were of botany, and how we used to sometimes go to the pasture for specimens of wild flowers he had never seen. Well, one

day while we were examining and studying some violets, old Mr. James happened to be in the bush near by looking for his cows, and saw us. When he went home he started a base scandal about our behavior, which gained belief among that class who are always ready to catch on to any gossip.

"Now, maybe you never heard of this before, for I believe most people have such a regard for you that they would hardly dare venture to tell you what was being freely talked about. I heard of it incidentally, but not wishing to cause you uneasiness, I didn't mention it to you. But somebody, it seems, was unkind enough to tell Mrs. Tanden a little of the gossip, which greatly excited her; and without asking any explanation from him, she took it for granted that it was all true, and soon let him know that she had heard it and believed it. Then he tried to explain, but she wouldn't pay any attention.

"When he found that we were the subjects of such unkind criticism, he suggested that we forego all our pleasures, both for his sake and for his wife's. Things went on in this way all the latter part of the summer and through the beginning of winter. He did all he could to preserve harmony at home, while his wife seemed more determined than

ever to make his life as uncomfortable as she possibly could. Sometimes she heaped on him a load of abuse ; at other times she relapsed into a kind of melancholy from which nothing would rouse her till the spell gradually wore off, only to give place to the same bitterness and complaining that nothing could satisfy.

"Well, it seems he endured all this fairly well, till Friday morning, when she was more irritable than usual, and he, hardly knowing what he was 'about, wrote the note you've likely heard about.

"Now, I wish to say, that truly, up to this point I had not the slightest connection with any scheme for bringing about this unfortunate state of things."

Again she realized her position, and her lip quivered as she pleaded : "You will believe me, father, won't you ? You know I have never deceived you, father, whatever other mistakes I've made."

"My dear child," the father hurriedly assured her ; "I have never before had reason to doubt your truthfulness, and am not disposed to now. So far the story seems very reasonable, and I believe when you finish I'll be satisfied with your explanations. But hurry on, for the case still seems confused."

Very carefully the narrator proceeded.

"Last Friday night you know I was at uncle's, where I had been ever since I left home. Saturday morning we were just getting through with the work, and were chatting on different subjects. Auntie had just been remarking that she was sorry to see Mrs. Tamden looking so poorly, and wondered if the care and worry of having so much company might be too much for her. She supposed it was an effort for her to be on the alert always, to entertain, for even if she seemed to be tired, her visitors might misunderstand her and think they were slighted. I, too, expressed my sympathy, for I really felt that the friends from the country who made the parsonage a public stopping-place, were the cause of a great deal of extra work and worry to Mr. and Mrs. Tamden."

"While we were talking, who should drive to the door but Mr. Tamden himself! He seemed to be very much excited, which made me wonder a little, for he usually was so calm and dignified. But when he explained that mother was very sick and needed me home, I had not the least suspicion but that his excitement was caused by his desire to get me home as soon as possible.

"With no other thought in my mind, and trembling with anxiety to see mother, I

gathered my things together in a hurry. When I got into the cutter with him I expected nothing but that he would take the very shortest way home. Imagine how surprised I was when he turned to the left at uncle's gate instead of to the right as I had expected. Even when I called his attention to his taking the wrong road I did not suspect anything amiss.

"Then I found out that he was not making a mistake, and that he had a purpose in view that I could not have thought him capable of up to that time. Then he told me all about the note that so agitated his wife, and of the terrible agony he was suffering when he allowed himself to write it. He said it had had the opposite effect to what he had intended. Instead of her reproaching him personally, as he expected, she had carried the letter to Mr. Price, who at once put him down as trying to poison Mrs. Tamden, and as the note was addressed to me, I was branded as an accomplice."

"Why did you not leave him at once when you found out what his intentions were? I am surprised that you went another road with him."

"I don't wonder that you're surprised, father; I was surprised at myself. But when I thought of how completely I was in

his power, and, when he used such threatening language towards me, lest I should attempt to escape, I was frightened into submission, and concluded that, for my own personal safety at least, I had better go with him till I should see a good chance to get away.

"He has a plan outlined that I have consented to though I didn't intend to help carry it out. But the whole thing was such a surprise to me that I was bewildered beyond self-control, and, listening to his representations and persuasions, I came this far. But I am so glad you have come! I felt sure some way would open up to let me out of the difficulty, though I didn't expect help so soon."

Mr. Murks hastened to express his delight in Amy's willingness to turn back and in her denial of helping concoct the diabolical scheme. "Now," he added, "all that we have to do is to tell Mr. Tamden your decision, and take the first train for home. Mother and the rest are waiting for you."

"Oh, father," she exclaimed, "I could never think of going back to Roxburg with you."

"Why not? Is there any place so suitable for you as home? We are ready and willing to take you back into the home and

into our confidence. You can take your old place just as you have always had it. Is there anything more we can do?"

"Oh, no. I've no doubt about those at home, but there are others to be considered," she objected. "I could not remove the conviction from the minds of the public that I have sinned as deeply as he has, and no matter how plausible my explanation may be, they will put it down, likely, to cunning or cleverness on my part, and will say that any one who would do what I have done is capable of getting up any kind of story to clear herself."

"But keeping away will not change their opinion," came the answer. "They will, in fact, be more ready to take it as an evidence of guilt, if you don't come back. I strongly urge you to face the unpleasantness at once—as it must be done sooner or later. Just come back and make a straightforward, truthful statement of the facts as they are, and you will have plenty of sympathy where you least expect it."

"Oh, I know that's about true and possibly, if I only had the necessary courage, the course you propose would be the best. But I have not, so I can't make up my mind to go back with you."

"Well, what better plan can you propose?"

Staying here," he repeated, "will not change public opinion in the least. If they are going to say hard things about you when you come back, do you suppose they'll be any more lenient if you stay away? To my mind it is by coming back you can convince them, by persisting in doing right, that you are innocent; whereas, if you don't return, they will at once pronounce you guilty."

"I have thought of all this, and yet I cannot think of meeting the scorn and contempt of my old associates. Please give me one more chance before you insist on my return, then, when I am calmed a little, I will come back. If I only had a little money of my own," Amy sighed, "I'd go to my aunt in Boston for a few weeks. You know she has often written asking me, and last summer made me promise to try to go this winter. It isn't likely she'll get any word of this, and I, of course, can drop in just as though I had planned it before leaving home. When you go back you could send my trunk by the earliest train, and," she hesitated before her honest father, "I don't—do you—would it be any harm for you to represent around home that this was in my mind from the first, and that I had no thought of aiding Mr. Tamden in any of his designs?"

"Well, Amy," the loving voice betrayed

Mr. Murks' feeling; "I don't want to be severe, though if you try to please me and do what seems to me to be the wisest thing, you'll think it over, and come home yet."

No answer came from the daughter but a series of sobs, which the father translated as meaning that she could not bring herself to do as he asked, so he began, regretfully: "Well, never mind, if you really think you can't come home now, I will let you have the money to take you to Boston and return. I promise to do all I honestly can to make it easy for you to come back."

For answer, the girl leaned her head on her father's shoulder and exclaimed between her sobs: "Oh, father, you are so good! I hate to ask you for your hard-earned money when I have been guilty of such folly. Please don't be ashamed of me for—I'll show people yet—God helping me—that I can be trusted." Then, as her whole soul rebelled against her misdeeds, she earnestly besought God, in her agony, "Oh, God, be Thou my Guide and keep me from sin. Don't let my dear friends have to suffer for my folly."

Then, as in her girlhood days, the sympathetic father laid his toil-worn hand on her youthful head and tried to comfort her.

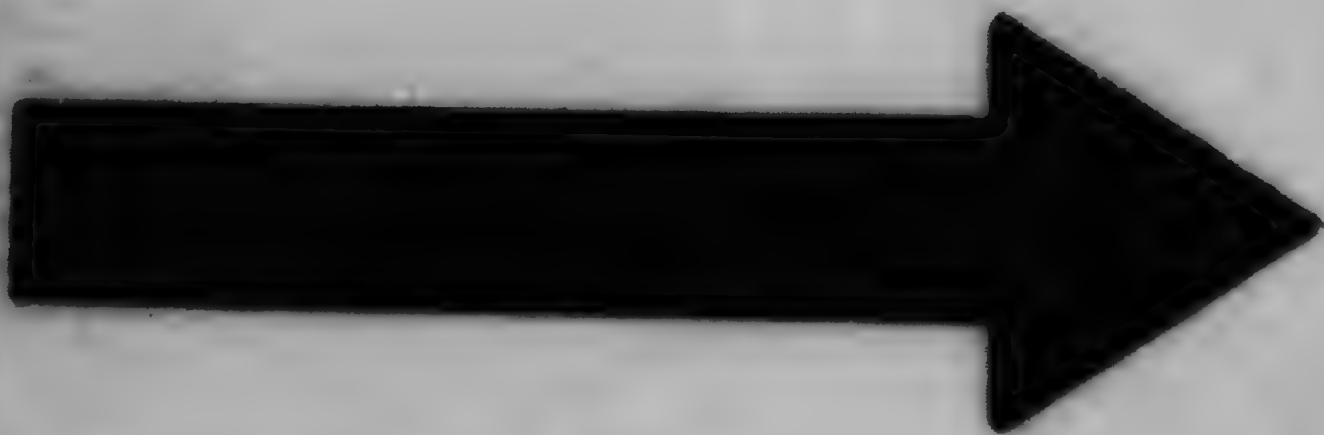
"This is a hard lesson for you, Amy, but I am glad you are looking above for

strength. You may be sure we'll all be praying for you at home. Don't worry about the money, dear. It was earned for the happiness of my family, and surely the eldest has first rights."

So they arranged that she should take the first train to Boston and not make any allusion to the real reason for her dropping in so unexpectedly, except, that by coming when she did, she had the company of a gentleman—a friend who was travelling her way—and as she was unused to looking after herself and luggage, it was very fortunate for her to have such an escort.

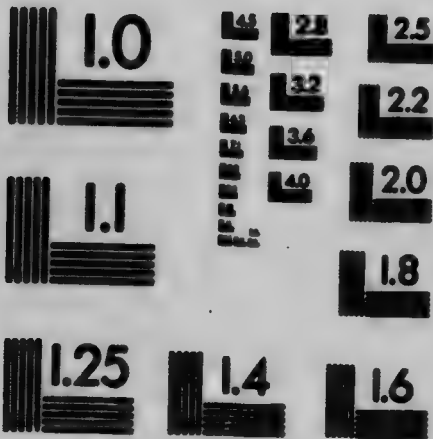
It is to be regretted that she should then have swerved from her general truthfulness, for which she was noted. And yet, under the pressure of such extraordinary circumstances, it is done every day by hundreds whose consciences are not as sensitive as they should be on those vital principles which lie at the foundation of pure morality.

Having been so far successful in persuading his daughter to turn away from her would-be destroyer, the father felt somewhat relieved, though it was with a heavy heart he turned his thoughts homeward and pictured the disappointment of the mother



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at his return without her much-loved daughter.

As it was he could not do otherwise. He would much rather she should go back with him, and yet he could sympathize with her in her reluctance to return at present.

This, however, he determined on,—to stay with her till he saw her safe on board the train for Boston—for he had an inward fear that should he leave her there, Tamden would find her out and very likely, by some threat, still persuade or coerce her to go with him.

Therefore, Mr. Murks told Amy he would go with her to the train, purchase her ticket, and after her departure acquaint Mr. Tamden with her decision. He did not purpose doing this out of any regard for the man, but he felt that the sooner he was put off the safer Amy would be, and the less likely to fall into his power again.

In carrying out his plans, circumstances were in Mr. Murks' favor for the present. The train for Boston would leave in about forty minutes, and it was hardly possible that Mr. Tamden could divine their purpose in time to throw any obstruction in their way, and Mr. Murks would be very careful not to let his foe know their plan till it was carried into effect.

As soon as possible the daughter was quietly conveyed to the station, the ticket bought, the train boarded, where Mr. Murks spent the few spare moments in earnest conversation with her. Again, Amy, by solemn protestations, declared herself innocent of any guilty purpose till she found herself in the power of the minister. Again she pointed out that even then her submission had only been pretended, and inwardly she had determined to leave his company at the first chance. Mr. Murks assured her that he had no doubt as to the truth of her statement, but warned her that the risk incurred in thus yielding was more than she could afford to repeat—and ever expect to regain the confidence of the public, or the fair reputation which she had so sadly marred already by her imprudent behavior.

With tear-streaming eyes Amy promised her father that this was the last time she would allow herself to be overtaken by such misguided folly, and hoped to prove to all her friends her sincerity by a consistent life.

With the conductor's cry, "All aboard!" the father bade his daughter good-bye and stepped from the moving train.

Mr. Murks hastened to the hotel to find Mr. McCallum. They decided not to wait

longer in Newtonville, but to leave a note for Mr. Tamden, and hurry off.

There was nobody to witness the chagrin of the runaway on reading simply that the three (Mr. McCallum, Mr. Murks and Amy) had gone from town—he might guess whither. With a few words of deep sorrow for Mr. Tamden's weakness in the hour of temptation, Mr. Murks commended him to the care of the Heavenly Father, and signed himself, "Your sorrowing friend, H. Murks."

We need not attempt to follow the drivers in their thoughts, as one with tired body, weary brain and sad heart, and one with indignant feeling and sympathy, set out on their homeward drive.

No doubt Mr. Murks wondered how he would meet the inquisitive gaze of the public, who are so ready to rejoice at the humiliation of even a good man. He and his companion rode most of those long, weary miles in silence. Occasionally they referred to the storm that was beginning to break in upon them in all its wildness and fury. The wind was taking the newly-fallen snow and piling it in the most fantastic shapes imaginable. But their plucky little horse seemed to think of nothing but "home," so each snowy embankment was faced with a determination,

begotten of past experience, not to relax till the obstacle was surmounted.

At the little wayside inn they rested the tired beast, partook of a hastily prepared lunch, and resumed their journey homeward, arriving at Roxburg at about four o'clock Sunday afternoon, having, in a little over thirty hours, travelled, with the same horse, something over 120 miles, without sleep or rest.

The deacon hurried to his home to report to the anxious ones there the result of his trip.

As a family they felt sadly humiliated, yet were greatly relieved to learn that the father's efforts had been so far successful. Mr. Murks very carefully told all that had occurred, as well as nearly all the conversation, most emphatically and hopefully dwelling on Amy's promise to be more guarded and consistent in the future.

It cannot be said that they all felt like relieving her of responsibility. They could plainly see now, after the trouble had come, where she might have given Mr. Tamden to understand months before that the special attentions he seemed inclined to show her were not appreciated. But such opportunity was past now, so they resolved to make it as light for her as possible by letting the

public see that her family had confidence in her still.

What a lonely Sabbath day this was to them ! What feelings crowded into their burdened hearts as its dreary hours dragged on ! Had they just returned from the funeral of the erring one, they could not have felt more sad and downhearted.

There had been no service in the little church that Sunday, though a number of those who had not heard of the happenings of the day before were on hand and in their accustomed places, and it was with no small misgivings and expressions of doubt, surprise and condemnation that they listened to the story of the minister's defection and flight.

But ill news travels fast, so it was speedily noised abroad in every corner of the parish and the surrounding country that the minister had deserted his wife and had eloped with Miss Murks. Of course each one had his or her own opinion as to which of the two was the more to blame, and it might as well be stated here that the explanation agreed upon between father and daughter was not credited by very many. Now this might happen if the plausible explanation had been true ; people are so ready to attribute wrong-doing where they have

the least possible chance, but when the circumstances are all against the explanation it is next to impossible to convince the public to a conclusion opposite to that already formed. Still, as is always the case, after a few weeks of public gossip, the people grew weary of the subject, and matters settled down to their usual, everyday monotony. Another minister had been sent to take the place of the runaway, and indirectly only was his name ever heard.

CHAPTER V.

THE RETURN AND WEDDING.

This state of quiet was not destined, however, to be of long continuance ; for at the end of two months, Miss Murks, having completed her visit to Boston, suddenly returned to her home, much to the surprise of nearly everyone, as there was the hope that she would try to regain her lost reputation by keeping away from the scene of her recent failure, and by discreet behavior under more favorable circumstances and in the midst of more favorable surroundings would enter upon a career of usefulness which her natural endowments and early training eminently fitted her for. But she thought otherwise, and was maturing her plans ; for she had not been back long before Dr. Loudon began to renew his attentions, and soon their intimacy was as great, if not greater, than it had ever been before. It had been known before her return that the doctor had, outwardly at least, exonerated her from all blame, declaring that she would never have behaved as she did had not the

minister exerted over her a strange mesmerism influence which made her will entirely subservient to his. And he often advanced this theory as an excuse for her otherwise strange conduct.

It is not necessary, nor would it be possible, to reproduce the scene which took place on their first meeting after her return. Suffice it to say it was painfully unpleasant for both. Entertaining the views which he did, he merely expressed his regret that she should have been the victim of one so base and designing. When, therefore, she began to apologize, he at once requested her to desist, as he did not attach any blame to her, and he was willing now for her sake to let the matter drop, and never mention it again. And to show her the confidence that he had in her he even suggested that they carry out their engagement, and get married as soon as they could conveniently arrange for the wedding. She was overjoyed at his magnanimity, and consented there and then to appoint the last Thursday of the present month, at 8 o'clock in the evening, as the most suitable time for them to start out on the sea of life together. They did not waste much time on dreams of future happiness; now that they were reunited and in the possession of each other's

confidence their cup of joy seemed running over, and they were willing to let the future take care of itself.

For a few days all was bustle and stir at the home of Deacon Murka. This being the first wedding in the family, the good deacon resolved that it should be in harmony in every way with the social position of the parties concerned. So the cooking was done on the most magnificent scale, the house underwent a thorough renovation, and things looked as though they intended to keep perpetual holiday. The bridal costume was purchased at one of the most fashionable establishments in the city, and all the family were decked out in new holiday attire. Numerous guests were also invited, comprising all the leading aristocracy of the country round about.

The wedding day finally arrived, and with it the usual gay company, and precisely at the hour appointed the little church across the way was comfortably filled with the friends, invited guests, and spectators, while the bride and groom, in the presence of the clergyman and the assembled congregation, plighted their faith the one to the other, and were pronounced man and wife. When the beautiful ceremony was over they repaired to the house, where, laden with

the delicacies of this and other climes, the table invitingly tempted those in waiting to a most sumptuous repast. And all that evening till the solemn hour of midnight drew near the merry song went round and every guest seemed in an ecstasy of delight. Never did the bride appear half so charming as now, and never did her many accomplishments appear to better advantage. Unlike a great many brides, there was an absence of that seeming shyness, which is often more apparent than real on such occasions, while she exhibited the same faculty which was so natural to her of being at perfect ease and ready for all the social requirements of the occasion. And the doctor, calm, dignified, meditative, while there were no outward expressions of gratification, nevertheless was very agreeable, while his countenance betokened a pleasant satisfaction in the possession of his newly-recovered treasure.

Little did that happy company think that their merry-making was to be brought to a sudden termination, but such was the case. Shortly after the old clock in the corner had struck eleven, and some of the older members of the company were talking of going home, the doctor took his hat, stepped outside the door, and was never seen again by any of that company save his bride. Mo-

ment after moment passed by, the guests meanwhile growing impatient at his prolonged absence, still he did not return. The moments became minutes, and the minutes soon multiplied into hours, and still he did not come. A hurried search was instituted, but nothing could be gleaned as to his whereabouts, and the search was abandoned, while the guests, quietly, with a look of disappointment, gradually dispersed, assuring the dejected bride meanwhile of their sympathy with her, and expressing the hope that it would all come out right again.

When the news of the unaccountable disappearance became public, as it soon did, Dame Gossip set herself to work to make the most of it, and even to add to its seriousness by many unfounded exaggerations. One believed he had suddenly become insane, "for have you not seen him acting strangely of late?" said they. "Yes," says another, "and I have been very much impressed with the unnatural expression of his countenance and the wild look in his eyes." Another declared that he had enough lately to drive any man crazy, and they would not be at all surprised if this should prove to be the correct solution.

Then there were others who did not hesitate to declare their belief that he had gone

away to the bush somewhere and committed suicide. "For," said they, "he was a man that would not hesitate to do desperate things; and he has very likely become ashamed of his weakness in marrying her, and to escape the criticisms which must come from certain quarters, he has gone and put a bullet through his head. And," they continued, "you will no doubt find his body back in the swamp or in some out-of-the-way place before the summer is over."

And so they reasoned and soliloquized; but all to no purpose. No raving maniac answering his description was ever seen running at large, disturbing the peace of the community, or the safety of its inhabitants. Nor was any wasted skeleton, in faded and soiled garments, ever discovered in some lonely, unfrequented nook; and so the thinking ones were at liberty to theorize with no fear of being successfully contradicted for the present. There was one more probable solution of the mystery which gradually gained credence with some that were in a measure interested, and that was that as he was heavily burdened with debts that he would never be able to pay, and as he had lately sold his property and practice for a good sum of money in cash, he had simply skipped, to use a common expression, and

that no doubt he would send for his wife as soon as he had decided on a location where the laws of his country could not reach him. For the present, however, and for some time to come nothing occurred that threw light in any way upon the dark and mysterious circumstances which surrounded his disappearance. The bride, nevertheless, bore up with wonderful cheerfulness, mingling with society as usual, and in no way giving any indication that she was suffering any severe anguish on account of her husband's sudden disappearance. After some months she announced the receipt of a letter from him stating that he was in New Mexico, and that he had secured a position as surgeon on a railroad that was building through there at that time. Here we must leave the doctor and his wife for a while and follow the fortunes of the principal actor in this drama.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSORS IS HARD.

While the conversation and movements between the worthy deacon and his daughter were going on, and they were laying their plans, which for the present, at least, seemed to be followed by such satisfactory results, our ex-clergyman, Mr. Tamden, was also laying plans, and as this was not the first unpleasant dilemma of his lifetime, he was not long in thinking out a scheme that to him seemed more feasible than any other, and so he at once decided on what should be his course. He saw at once that he must give up all his cherished plans in reference to Miss Murk's and must start out in the world alone, without a record that he would care to publish, without a testimonial as to the value of the services he had rendered the church, and without a character such as he would like to expose to the world in all its true inwardness. However, he had considerable money, and whether or not it was rightfully his

did not much concern him ; he would use it for his own gratification and pleasure, as far as it was possible for him to do so.

Of course, after the sudden interruption of his intended course, and the exciting conversation of the past few hours, sleep was out of the question. So, to keep his spirits up, he had recourse to the brandy bottle with which he had provided himself on leaving Roxburg. This did not help him plan with any more precision, but rather inclined him to act with greater rashness than usual.

He had been used to city life from his earliest recollection, and, as Chicago was a common rendezvous for the venturesome of all classes, he decided to make his way there.

Having arrived at this determination he professed to himself that he was glad to be alone, now his anger at the note (which had been slipped under his door) had passed off. He found out the time the first train should leave for Chicago and with all haste paid his hotel bill, transferred his trunk, and soon was on his way to the great metropolis of the West. After an uneventful trip of thirty-six hours in a palace car he stepped to the platform of Chicago station. Around he saw one moving mass of humanity from almost every conceivable rank of

life—each bent on his own business and none seeming to pay any attention to the stranger who had so lately been added to their number.

Though he did not feel perfectly at ease, still it was a relief to know that no burly policeman was eyeing him suspiciously, as he might have expected after his recent experience at Newtonville.

The excitement of his escape, in a measure, being over, Mr. Tamden felt the promptings of hunger at noon as he had not for some time, so sending his trunk to one of the most palatial hotels, he proceeded to make himself as comfortable as possible at five dollars a day. This sum obtained for him a spacious, well-furnished, well-kept room—one calculated in every way to invite rest and comfort.

By the time he had given his toilet some little attention the dinner bell was ringing, so he hastened to the magnificent dining hall, where every delicacy that could tempt the appetite of even a moderately hungry man, was served.

I need not trouble my reader with the bill of fare, but simply state that he did more than ample justice to the good things set before him, and arose from the table with a sense of satisfaction unknown to him for

the last few days. When the meal was finished his next thought was for a short sleep, of which he had had but very little during three nights. He therefore went to his room, threw himself on the bed, and in a few minutes, despite all the excitement he had so recently passed through, he was in a deep sleep, from which he did not awake till the bell again sounded that the hour for supper had arrived. For this meal he was also ready, his trouble not seeming to have any effect upon his appetite. A satisfactory night's sleep, followed by a hearty breakfast, and he felt himself in a fair condition to "do the town," as is sometimes expressed.

With this thought uppermost in his mind, he sallied forth upon the busy thoroughfares of this wonderful city of the West. Accustomed as he was to city life from his boyhood he betrayed none of the awkwardness of a country novice as he moved hither and thither among the crowds that even at this early hour were hurrying to and fro, each one seemingly in haste to enter upon the activities of their several callings in life, though some of those who met or passed him by were, like himself, mere onlookers, or else strangers who were here for the purpose of making their fortune, and were anxi-

ously on the lookout for some congenial and at the same time remunerative employment. At first our adventurer was but little concerned about matters of this kind, till the thought occurred to him that all his funds would serve him but a little time if he kept up to the style of living which he had already entered upon ; and as this thought began to take hold upon him he decided that he had better be looking around for some profitable investment for the few hundred dollars that he had brought with him. He did not care to deposit it in the bank, as the rate of interest was so small that he would hardly be able to live a week on the income of a year. He shrank from any legitimate business, he never having had any experience in this direction. There was one way open to him, however. He was skilful with cards. He would try his luck at the gambling table. Others had made money in that way, why not he ? And so he decided that he would try his hand at cards when a favorable chance offered itself, and when he had taken in a little more of the city's sights and wonders.

Now, it so happened that he did not have long to wait before he had an opportunity of displaying his skill in this direction. In the same hotel with himself, and sitting at

the same table, was a gentleman of affable manners, with whom he was soon on intimate terms, and both of them being apparently of a communicative turn of mind, it did not take long for them to understand or imagine they understood each other. Among the topics discussed the question of pastime came in for more than an ordinary share; and as they were gentlemen of leisure they decided that there was no better way for them to spend an idle hour or two than at a friendly game of cards. No sooner had they agreed on this than the sights of the city began to lose their attractions, until the greater part of the day was spent in this way. The ex-clergyman for a time seemed to be the more proficient of the two, and he felt quite elated with his skill as time after time he saw his opponent's chagrin at his utter defeat.

This pastime was enjoyed again and again, sometimes one winning the game, sometimes the other, but in the long run Mr. Tamden seemed to be the more skilful player. But as every recreation becomes monotonous when followed to too great a length so it was with this game between these two men. Consequently, one day when they both seemed conscious of this, the "stranger," as we shall designate Tamden's

friendly opponent, suggested that more for the purpose of keeping up their interest in the game than with the idea of making anything they deposit a small sum of money. To this Tamden agreed, and all the more readily from the fact that he was, as far as he could judge, the better player. So the stakes were laid on the table, beginning with a dollar, as the smallest sum that gentlemen of means would think of advancing in the interest of the game. As was intended and expected, the game assumed a fresh interest, for each one had something at stake now, and so was doing his best to win. Mr. Tamden, however, was rewarded for his diligence, and in the end the stranger's dollar dropped into his pocket as a companion to the one he had ventured. After following out this plan for some time, the results being fairly equal, though the balance, if any, being in favor of Tamden, the stranger proposed, with the same object in view, that they increase the deposit, he at the same time, as he was the poorer player, offering to pay for the treats. To both of these proposals Tamden readily assented, he, of course, believing that it would result in his finally at least doubling the amount of money already in his possession. Here, however, was where he made his greatest blunder, especially in

consenting to the treating. The bell was rung, the waiter supplied with their order, and in a short time they were discussing the merits of their respective drinks. Mr. Tamden declared his preference for brandy in its purity. Nothing milder, he said, met his taste or craving. The stranger, however, expressed a liking for Madeira or some of the lighter drinks, on the ground that he was unable to stand anything strong. Mr. Tamden did not seem to notice that the stranger not only preferred the milder drinks, but that he was very careful to no more than put them to his lips, and set his glass down again little, if any, lowered by his going through the formality of drinking. And so, during the evening, treat after treat was proposed, and each time Tamden took brandy and drained his glass, while the stranger only called for milder drinks and partook very sparingly.

As a consequence Tamden became reckless in his playing, no doubt to the satisfaction of the stranger, who was all along showing a deeper interest in the game. Such reckless indulgence could not long be followed without a corresponding recklessness in playing, which, as events go to prove, was to the utter disadvantage of our hero. As a rule, all through their playing he had gained oftener

than he had lost. Now that his wits had deserted him and he was so confident of his skill he was ready for the most desperate venture in order to double his money, and so, when the stranger proposed a wager that meant either this or the loss of all that he had, he quickly accepted the risk. To his overheated imagination there was something grandly inspiring to have \$1,000 on the board, and to see it covered with an equal sum by his stranger friend. And in truth the very thought of what he had at stake in a measure served to sober him, for it meant to him a good deal more than even the stranger was aware of. It meant being cast out friendless and penniless in a few days to gain a livelihood as best he could, with no knowledge of any honorable calling or trade to which he could turn his hand, or it meant, if he were successful, a very encouraging capital with which he might be able to start in some business whereby he could make his way in the world. So the money was counted out, the cards were dealt, and after each had examined his hand, the play began. For a short time Tamden appeared to be getting the best of it, to the seeming discomfiture of his opponent, who frequently gave vent to expressions of disgust at his lack of skill, and so much

at stake ! But while he was thus leading his opponent to believe that he was being worsted in the game it was evident to anyone at all acquainted with the possibilities of a pack of cards, that he had not by any means exhausted his chances ; on the contrary, he was reserving his skill for one final, supreme effort that would completely take his opponent by surprise and strip him of his imaginary wealth. Nor did he have long to wait, for by this time the effects of the brandy, coupled with his over-confidence in his skill, had made Mr. Tamden so careless, or even reckless in his playing, that just when he was so very sure of an easy triumph, he was suddenly awakened from his dream to find that he was doomed to be the loser. He saw that in this very game his all was about to be taken from him. As soon as this fact dawned upon him he became greatly confused, and though he made two or three weak efforts to regain his lost ground, he soon saw how useless it was, and acknowledged himself beaten. There was this much of a man about him, however : when he saw that he was ruined he did not complain or accuse his opponent of unfair playing, but rather complimented him on his skill and success. The only remark made by him that could be interpreted

as savoring of weakness was, "Well, this game may not have made you rich, but it has made me poor. Practically, I hand over to you my last dollar. But," he added, "you have won a fair game, and I shall not complain."

His victorious opponent was, however, disposed to be magnanimous, and so, after counting over his gains, pushed across the table a couple of \$20 gold pieces, remarking as he did so that he would never see a fellow thief he had beaten left without enough to keep him over night; and, gathering up what remained, remarked that as it was getting pretty late, and as his business made it necessary for him to make an early start in the morning, he would just say good-bye, at the same time expressing the hope that his victim would be more fortunate with the next man who had a game with him. He then closed the door behind him, and that was the last Tamden saw of him.

CHAPTER VII.

REPENTANCE.

Left to his own reflections, our friend's feelings were anything but pleasant. "Here I am," he soliloquized, "in the heart of a strange city with no way open for making a dollar. I owe a week's board, which will have to be settled before I can even take my trunk away from the house, and I have less than \$50 all told with which to begin life and make my way in the world. Fool that I was after reaching here not to look around for some investment that would be safe and profitable, and greater fool was I to allow a moment's blind infatuation to lead me into this course that it seems is likely to end disastrously no matter how I plan. If I could only undo the events of the last few weeks and get back into the work that I left so ignobly, and see my wife and children at home with me again, nothing could ever induce me to repeat the wrongs that I have been guilty of."

As he pondered thus, and driven almost to desperation at the thought of his present

condition, he thought of the Prodigal Son, and how gladly he was welcomed back after he had spent his all, and he could trace a resemblance between his case and the Prodigal's thus far. He at once decided to continue the similarity of conduct: he would arise and go to his bishop, confess to him his sin and wrong, implore his forgiveness, and "who knows," thought he, "but that he will forgive me, reinstate me in the work, and help me to arise again."

No sooner was this decision arrived at than he began to plan its execution. He went, therefore, to the landlord, settled his bill, found when the next train left for the east, packed his trunk, and in the course of a few hours boarded the train for the city of Quebec, and tried to compose himself to sleep. Whether he succeeded in his attempts or no he appeared to the onlookers to be locked in a profound slumber, from which the conductor with great difficulty aroused him when he came to punch his ticket.

A couple of days of monotonous rattling of wheels, tooting of engines, varied by the brakeman calling out the names of the stations or where to change cars, or the shout of "All aboard," and the city of Quebec was reached.

If he had been lavish with his money on

his way out he was not so on the return journey. For example : He went out first-class, and took a sleeper as well, lunched in the dining car, and smoked the best cigars. On the return trip he travelled second-class, slept with his head on the back of the seat, took crackers and cheese for his repast, moistened by a drink of cold water, and eschewed the cigar altogether. Levis was reached in the grey dawn of the morning, and the ferry was crossed just as the daylight was getting clear. Once landed in the city he enquired his way to the residence of the bishop, on whose kindness of disposition he was about to throw himself in the hope that he would be disposed to deal leniently with him.

He had no difficulty in finding where the bishop lived, and as it was nearly eight o'clock when he reached the place, and as the bishop was at home and engaged in his work, he soon gained his chance for an interview. The bishop bade him be seated, and after glancing at him for a moment exclaimed : "Is this Mr. Tamden ?" "Yes," said our clerical delinquent, "I have returned after a month's sinning and wandering, like the Prodigal, to see if there is bread in my Father's house. I have come to confess my wrong and to promise that I

will no more offend. If you will only consider my case favorably, I promise you that you will have no further trouble with me, but I will go back to my loved work a wiser and better man. I will take any place you may see fit to give me, and will not complain at any hardship that I may have to pass through."

The bishop replied very kindly but firmly in terms which unmistakably expressed his utter disapproval and contempt for the course he had pursued, and ended by telling him that as far as he could speak from the facts which he had been able to gather there was but little hope of his ever again getting a place as pastor of a congregation. The bishop was to pronounce summary sentence by expelling him forever from the ministry of the church, and by notifying all parties interested to that effect.

The penitent was considerably nonplussed by this brief but pointed sentence, but he essayed to put in yet one plea more, and so he continued: "My dear bishop, I am fully aware of the justice of the sentence you have just pronounced against me, and should you sternly enforce it I shall have no just cause for complaint, but you will remember the sayings of Him whom we both call Master and Lord, 'Blessed are the merciful for they

shall obtain mercy.' 'Forgive and you shall be forgiven.' 'If he turn and say, I repent, forgive,' etc., and other texts to the same purpose." But it all had no effect. "You may go, now," said the bishop, "and in case you are penniless, here is a dollar with which to get your breakfast, and please do not come around this way again, for I have no time to waste in useless discussion. I am sorry for you, sorry for your people, who in the midst of their liberality and zealous co-operation have been so shamefully deserted and disgraced by your actions, sorry for the church which took you from your obscurity, fitted you for the highest calling possible this side of heaven, and then entrusted you with the care of souls and the interests she holds so dear. But though you have proved yourself unworthy of the high and holy calling of the Christian ministry there may still be a place which you can honorably fill in the work of life. You have splendid natural endowments, a superior education, and a special faculty of favorably impressing those you may chance to have intercourse with. There are a number of callings to which you can devote your capabilities, and in which you can be of service to your fellow-beings; although I could not on any consideration give you work as a

minister I will still like to see you renewed. I hope and pray that, reconciled and restored to your wife and family, and forever turning your back on the follies of the past, you may, in some honorable calling, regain the confidence of your fellowmen and become a respected, trusted and useful member of society." So saying, he showed his caller to the door, bade him good morning, and returned to his study to complete his work.

Disappointed, humiliated, condemned in his own conscience, Mr. Tamden turned down the street, wondering what he would do next. He never had been in so discouraging a fix before, not even when he came from the city of London, a poor boy. Then, if he was poor, he had friends, character, and a world-wide opportunity. But now he is a ruined man, money all gone, friends all gone; even his character, the one thing a man has to depend on when everything else has fled, is so sadly marred and disfigured that it will be something more than he can ever hope for to see it restored to its former standing.

Still he does not despair. He has fallen, it is true, but he remembers that others have been guilty of as heinous crimes as that which has disgraced him: David, for in-

stance, in his alliance with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite; and he resolves, there and then, that he will put forth his mightiest effort to regain his standing in society and among men. True, he has not much to start with, in a strange city, where nearly everyone speaks in (to him) an unknown tongue, no money, no rich friend to give him a cheque for \$500 or \$1,000, with the assurance that he need be in no hurry about paying it back: if he will only keep up the interest for a few years it will be all that is necessary. Nor has he any influential friend to put in a "good word for him" with some business firm or educational institution; nor has he even a "good name," which the good Book tells us is "better than great riches." But he has a great deal of business capacity, energy, and, in spite of his fall, a laudable ambition to yet stand well among men.

And so, in spite of all his discouragements, his resolution is taken to begin at once to buy back that which he has parted with for so little. And, let us hope, that if a genuine conversion ever took place in his life it began in the lonely hour that he spent after leaving the bishop's residence.

But, though he had now decided what should be his de, as far as his

principles were concerned, he was at quite a loss as to what was the best course to follow at the present moment. This much, however, was plain to him, with his newly-formed plans,—there must of necessity be inaugurated an entirely new style of living. Hitherto self-denial had been with him an unknown experience, apart from the necessity which forced it upon him; now, with his very limited means, if he was to begin an honorable course, he must start out by practising the closest economy possible.

There had been a time, for instance, when he would have gone to an hotel, and, though it was his last dollar, he would have spent it all for one luxurious breakfast and trusted to luck or some sharp practice to open up a way for his dinner, and so on. But now he was looking at things in a different light; now the question was, how far can he make his dollar go? and so, much as he would have enjoyed a sumptuous repast, he contented himself with ten cents spent in crackers and cheese, with a drink of cold water from the "town pump."

The plain but wholesome meal being disposed of, the next thought that occurred to him was to locate his wife, and, if possible, have an interview with her, confess his wrong, ask her forgiveness, promise amend-

ment, and plead to be taken again into her confidence and affection. But though this was the first step necessary, he had great reluctance towards carrying it out. In the first place he knew that he did not deserve the favor or notice which he was about to crave ; and he needed no argument to make him feel the humiliation of his position. Then, he was only presuming that she might not refuse to see him or have anything more to do with him, and, finally, if she were disposed to meet him in a forgiving spirit, her friends, who, he knew, had great influence with her, might prevail on her, in her own interests, to leave him to himself. In this case it would make it much more difficult for him to carry out the reforms in his personal habits and life that were just now assuming an intelligible and working shape in his own mind. He felt that now more than ever he needed sympathy, counsel and co-operation if he were to accomplish anything worthy of the high purpose which was already beginning to assert its right to live in him and govern his future life.

He was encouraged, however, in this by the thought that he had always had a powerful influence over her, and he felt quite certain that if she would only consent to see

him the most difficult part of the task would be accomplished.

With this thought buoying him up he started out to see if he could find her. He, of course, knew where her old home was, and where her mother, with a younger son, still resided. He was not sure, however, of finding her there. He remembered how bitterly her friends had opposed their marriage, and how they had never been friendly with her since ; and it might be that her sensitiveness would not allow her to seek a home for herself with her family where for so many years she had been looked upon with disfavor. And then, if he should find out that she was there with the children how could he manage to meet her ?

But puzzling as these reflections were they did not deter him from his purpose, but rather had the effect of making him more determined to follow out his plans to their full consummation. And as his decision was now firmly taken he started off in the direction of the street and the home from where a few years ago he had brought the object of his present search a blushing bride.

This walk led him through the business part of the city, and as he was known by few, if any, besides his wife and her friends,

he did not hesitate to take the nearest though it was the most frequented street.

As he hurried along, glancing at the signs that hung conspicuously over the sidewalks, or in a more modest manner were fastened in the window or over the door, and framing to himself the speeches he would be likely to need in his first interview, either with his wife or her people, his attention was suddenly attracted by a very familiar name in the window of a little shop on the opposite side of the street. It was none other than "Mrs. Tamden, Fashionable Milliner." How his heart palpitated! His senses seemed almost to leave him, as he rapidly reviewed the past, and thought of their loveless parting. But though he was glad in one sense that the way for a meeting had been made so easy he hardly felt himself equal to the emergency which so suddenly confronted him. He had been picturing to himself his irate father-in-law or haughty mother-in-law or revengeful brother-in-law heaping upon him to their hearts' content their reproaches, threats and curses. But for the present no such calamity is in sight. He has only his wife to deal with, as far as he can tell, and yet he shrinks from the interview, in fact, could almost wish it were farther away so that he might have a little

more time to think and plan ; and so he walks on past, putting off that which but a brief half-hour ago he was so anxious to bring to a speedy consummation. The great question with him now is, "How shall I greet her ? What shall I say that will convince her that I still have a love for her, though I have behaved myself so unworthily of her love, or respect ?" Thus communing with himself he walks up and down dreading and yet anxious to know what will be the result of the much longed-for meeting.

As yet there is not much stir on the streets, unless it be the business men hurrying away to the office or store or other place of business, and he knows that it is a very opportune time for him, if he can only bring himself to the point of introducing himself. While he is looking at the name, which to him means so much, he sees a woman about to enter, whose form and movements he at once recognizes as belonging to his wife. Words cannot describe the excitement into which he is thrown by this his first sight of her since the hour he parted from her for the choir practice in the church the night on which the fatal letter was discovered which made flight so necessary. She did not, perhaps because she did not expect to see him, appear to recognize him, which

was fortunate for both, as there would likely have been a street scene if she had. In quite a businesslike way she put the key in the door, opened, entered, and closed the door behind her, and for the moment was lost to view. "Now," thought he, "is my time. Customers have not yet begun to arrive, so I had better rush in at once and have it over with." But though this was his firm decision he felt his heart palpitating strangely. Perhaps never since he asked her to be his for life had he been in such a state of utter excitement and confusion.

But the resolution was taken and could not be drawn back from, and so, summoning all his will power for one final, supreme effort, and prepared in his heart for any possible reception that might greet him now (a new experience for him, though he had been a minister of the Gospel for so many years) he lifted his heart silently to God in prayer that his errand might be a successful one. Then he turned his face and his steps boldly towards the door, and was soon rapping for admission.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEETING AND REUNION.

In response his wife came and, apparently before she was fully aware who the caller was, told him to step inside. But just as she did so their eyes met, and almost with a startled groan she drew back, and made as though she would have closed the door and kept him outside.

Before she had time to carry out her intention, however, he had entered and stood looking at her like one bewildered, which look was met by a similar look from her; and she began to realize, no matter what her resolve to the contrary, that the old fire was not yet extinguished, that she still felt for him that old feeling commonly called love. He may have sinned, but if he had come back penitent and humble, she could still hold out to him a "Welcome home."

"Why, Charles!" she exclaimed, breaking the silence, "where did you come from? I had given up all thought of ever seeing you again, especially at so early an hour."

"My dear Mary," he exclaimed, "I have returned like the bad penny, though I hope not like the bad penny to be got rid of at the first opportunity. I have come to tell you what a hell I have passed through since I saw you last and, I might say, since I wrote those fateful lines which so disturbed you. But before I tell you all my story I want to ask if there is any use of my confessing to you my wrong and asking forgiveness and reconciliation. If not, I may as well spare you the pain, and myself the humiliation which is involved in a rehearsal of my experiences of the last few weeks."

"My dear Charles!" she exclaimed, as she rushed to his side, threw her arms around his neck, pressed her lips to his cheek, while the hot tears freely began to flow; "I cannot tell you how I have longed since you left for this hour, and wondered whether we should ever meet again or not. When I gave you my heart and my heart's warmest affection I gave them for life, and though your conduct may have irritated and even exasperated me at times, it still left untouched those tender emotions which were kindled at our first meeting, I may say. I have passed days and nights of the most intense agony since reading the letter to which you refer, and, were it not for our

children, could have wished for, and even sought, death a great many times, but. I could not think of leaving them without anyone to look after or care for them, and so I have entered upon the struggle for subsistence with the determination that while I am able to work they shall be cared for."

"My dear Mary," he exclaimed, "your words to me are better than I deserve. I would, if I could, forever blot from memory's page the dark record of the past few weeks, but, of course, this is impossible. You can never forget that while you have been faithful, confiding and true, I have been base, ungrateful and false. But with a stronger purpose than ever I here and now solemnly promise that if you will only try me this once more, while I have head and hands and heart you shall never have cause to regret taking me back into your affections. And I want just here to assure you that my conduct has not been in every particular as black as on the surface it appears to most people who are but partly acquainted with the circumstances. The letter which was the cause of so much disquietude and scandal was not true to fact. You, of course, remember the provocation I was under when you accused me of thinking more of Amy

than I did of you, and of telling me how I had better go and live with her if I was going to pay my attentions to her in that way. Now, I most emphatically declare that while our intimacy may have been indiscreet, it was never carried beyond the bounds of simple friendship till that fateful morning. But I need not go any further. I am heartily ashamed and sorry for my conduct, and have come back to you determined to fulfil my duty in a more faithful manner than ever before."

She looked up into his face, her eyes filled with tears and her whole frame shook with the most violent agitation. With great effort she soon had her feelings under control, and then calmly and firmly expressed herself something as follows :

"I do not doubt your sincerity or the real nature of the promises you are now making, and I think I could unhesitatingly accept them but for one thing, namely, the fact that similar vows were made and obligations entered upon at the time of our marriage, and however sincere you were then, your fickleness of mind and of heart did not prove the constancy of your affection when other attractions offered."

"I admit all you are saying," he replied, "and am free to confess that you have

good grounds for having nothing more to do with me, and yet, so much depends upon our reunion that I fain would press my suit and beg for a restoration to your love and favor. That I do not deserve the favor that I ask I freely admit ; that with all the deep longing of my nature I feel I need it, I urgently insist."

"I am perfectly willing to give you another chance," she replied, "to prove your worthiness, by taking you back to my heart and by giving up to you my heart's best affections, though it must be with the distinct understanding that you must hereafter avoid the causes which led to our former misunderstanding and separation."

"My dear," he replied, "if promises can be of any use in convincing you of my sincerity, then I promise you in the name of all that is sacred and true not to deceive you again, nor to allow my weakness for company to endanger the love and happiness of my home. If it would make it any stronger I would take my oath to be true."

"Oh, you need not go so far as that," she said. "I will again make the venture, for I feel convinced that this time you mean what you say."

"I am delighted to have you speak in that way," he replied. "And now that we under-

stand each other, we may as well go at once to the root of the matter and plan for the future. What disposition can you make of your business? for I suppose you are aware that we will have to move away from here before we can begin life over again."

"I am aware of that," she answered, "but it will take some little time to adjust matters satisfactorily. I am doing a very good business, have a well selected constituency of customers, and by taking a little time I can, no doubt, secure a purchaser on such terms as will make it unnecessary to sell at much, if any, sacrifice. Then," she added, "I shall have to make some arrangement with my brothers and friends who so generously subscribed the necessary capital to start this business, and who made it one of the conditions that it was to remain mine so long as I maintained my independence from you, and now, when they find that you have returned and that I purpose going back to you again, they will, no doubt, demand the immediate and full return of the money which they have so kindly advanced to help me in my extremity. The best plan that suggests itself to me is that you keep out of the way, as it were, for a time, and let me follow out my plans as though you were not concerned, and in the meantime I

will look around for a customer, which, by the way, should not be hard to find, as there is always someone with money only too glad to invest in a business that is paying a reasonable interest on the invested capital. I think by a little watchfulness I will be able to sell at a figure which, with the profits already on hand, will pay back all the money and give us something on which to begin somewhere else."

"I quite agree with you there," he said ;
"I can see your exceptionally fine business ability and shrewdness, and will be pleased to let you manage these things according to your better judgment. But what," said he, "about the children? Though I left in so heartless a way I have had many a lonely hour while absent, and I never knew, till it looked as though I should see them no more, how deeply they were entwined in my affections. Where are you making your home, and can I go with you, and get only one glance at them and hear them say as of old, 'Dear papa?'"

"I think," she replied, "much as it would please you to see the children and much as it would please them to see you, it will be better all around for things to remain as they are till I get my business wound up. But it may not take long. A woman of

money and experience has already been enquiring on what terms I would sell my right to the business, and a price has already been named which if accepted will put the matter beyond question."

"I see the wisdom of all your suggestions," he added, "and will therefore do just as you wish."

And so it was arranged she should go on with her business just as formerly, only she would now take advantage of the first good offer and sell out, saying nothing to her friends at home of her plans till the time came for closing up and she was ready to pay them back.

In the meantime he felt sure that should he set out in real earnest he would have no trouble in finding something to do that would not only pay his way, but add a little to their store with which again to begin life.

By this time customers were beginning to put in an appearance, and, as they did not wish to excite any curiosity as to who he might be, after arranging for a meeting at her boarding place in a day or two, he left her, filled with new resolutions and hopes for the future. True, they would start practically penniless, but with a clearer knowledge of each other and of their mutual duties.

True, there would be a great many things to settle before they were in perfect accord, and he would have to make a great many explanations that would require a good deal of tact in order to fully satisfy her, but the present interview had been so far beyond his expectations in his favor that he had no very grave fears for the future.

For the first time since the elopement, at any rate, he felt an impulse to praise God for the success which He had given him, and in harmony with his newly-formed purpose he determined to be true to God and the right regardless of consequences. And now, for the first time in his life, he started out, a stranger in a strange city, to look for work. Though he scarce knew what to do or where to go, his knowledge of city life in the old country would be of considerable help to him. He could remember how it was in London, where he had spent the greater part of his boyhood, and he had no doubt of his ability to find some honest, paying employment. He was going to look for no particular occupation, for he had never learned a trade in his younger days; but he knew that he was very ready at any kind of work. He could take a place behind the counter or in the office, or if he did not happen to find a position in either of

these places he would work in the yard, on the street, anywhere, at anything, only let him make an honest living. With this purpose in his heart, and lifting a prayer to God for guidance and help, he started out.

To facilitate his efforts to secure employment he invested in a morning paper and hastily scanned the columns headed "Wanted," from which and that other column, "Situations Vacant," he soon made out a list that would take him a good part of the day to hunt up. He saw openings for bookkeepers, salesmen, porters, coachmen, sextons and other callings in life. As he scanned the list he felt his heart throb with a strange sensation at the thought that work might be nearer than he had hoped. True, he discovered that most of those asking for help were somewhat particular about references, and he knew that if these were insisted on he would have a poor show, but he thought he could meet the difficulty by offering his services on probation for a few days, in the belief that when his faithfulness was found out there would be no difficulty in keeping the position as long as would be necessary. True, he would have to keep utter silence as to his former record: he would even have to keep back his name and, if necessary, give a part for the whole. Thus

armed and guarded he set out to make his first call. It was in a wholesale establishment, advertising for an assistant bookkeeper. He decided on this because he was a ready penman, quick at figures, and when a boy had had some experience in that kind of work, and ever since had more or less to do in managing church finances. So he sought out the firm of Wide-awake & Co., and in person put in his application.

Upon entering the establishment he at once enquired for the manager, and was politely directed to the office, where he found a tall, grey-haired man with dark, penetrating eyes, softened by a kindly expression that made his appearance rather attractive than otherwise. As soon as Mr. Tamden entered the other pointed to a seat, and in a tone bordering on harshness enquired what he could do for him. "I have come," said the applicant, "in response to your advertisement for an assistant bookkeeper, to see if the situation is still vacant, and if so put in my application for the position."

"The vacancy still continues," replied the manager, "and we shall only be too glad to employ you, provided everything is satisfactory. I suppose you have credentials from your last employer?"

"Unfortunately," said Mr. Tamden, "I

have been in another calling for some years, but being out of employment just now, I decided this morning only to apply to you for the vacancy. If ability to do the work satisfactory will be of any use I think a day or two on trial will be sufficient to convince you that I am fully competent for the situation; and I have no doubt that when you are through with me if I should require credentials there will be no difficulty in securing them."

"Well," said the manager, "we are in urgent need of help just now. One of our men has been but lately stricken down with pneumonia, and the doctor says it will be some time before he is able to take his place in the office, and as the busy season is upon us, showing signs of a greater rush than usual, we will give you \$10 for a week on trial, and if your work proves satisfactory you may consider yourself engaged, at least until the other man is able to take his place again, and then if we should have further need of your services there will be a reasonable advance in wages. However, just now we only promise you work for the limited time spoken of."

"I am sure," replied the stranger, "I cheerfully accept your offer and am ready

for work just as soon as I can make arrangements for a suitable boarding place."

"All right," rejoined the manager. "We will look for you at noon to-day, as you will find no difficulty in the matter of accommodations, there being a number of private boarding houses very convenient to this place."

Having thus decided, Mr. Tamden left the establishment, wondering at the sudden and encouraging turn in his worldly prospects. It was scarcely three hours since he landed in the city in about as gloomy and despondent a frame of mind as it was possible for a man to be in, and during that time he had met the bishop, and found that he had nothing to hope for from him, had become reconciled to his wife, made plans for the future, and, not the least to him at this juncture, had, without much effort, secured remunerative employment, possibly for as long as it would be necessary. And so he began to reap at once, almost, the fruits of right-doing. As he passed along the street from the establishment he began to look around for the needed lodgings. In two or three windows that he passed he saw a large placard with "Boarders Wanted," in heavy black letters; but much as the reader may be surprised he did

not go into any of them for the purpose of enquiring. Another thought was running through his mind. In his interview with his wife he had forgotten to ask her any particulars about her lodgings. He would go to her at once, acquaint her with his good fortune, and see what she thought of his taking up his lodgings at the same place. The people there would not need to know anything of their relationship, for to all not acquainted they could appear as perfect strangers. With this idea uppermost in his mind he made his way back to the little shop where he had left his wife only an hour or so ago, to inform her of his success and make the necessary enquiries as to board, lodgings, etc. It did not take him long to reach the place, and as there did not appear to be anyone inside he entered at once, and without making any explanation, exclaimed, "Well, my dear, it is all right. I have got work at the first place that I applied, with a fairly good salary, and I have come to ask you what you think of my looking for board at the same place where you get your meals? We could appear as perfect strangers, and yet often have a chance for a word. I will go by my assumed name, while you retain your proper name, so there will be no complications on that point."

"I am very glad," she replied, "that you have found so soon work that you can do well, and with a firm that bears such a good reputation for honesty and fair dealing. As far as a boarding place goes I think it will be all right for you to stay at the same place with me. Mother very kindly keeps the children for me, and I could stay there too, but it is so far from my business that I decided to stay near my work, only going home occasionally to see how the children are getting on ; so there will be no danger of exposure through them."

She then gave him the street and number of her boarding house, and he went out to make the necessary arrangements. As it happened, they had a spare room which, upon inspection, he decided would be a very suitable one for him, and after agreeing about the price and promising to pay at the end of each week, he went out and engaged a carter to go to the station for his trunk, which in due time was landed at the door and placed in the room already reserved.

By the time this was attended to the dinner bell was ringing, and as he did not want to be late at the beginning of his job he sat down at the first table, and partook of a very wholesome, satisfying meal. As this was only a few blocks from where he had

agreed to work he had ample time to reach there before the hour agreed upon.

Just as he was about to leave the hallway his wife came in, and her confiding look was an inspiration to him such as he had never felt before, and made him more determined than ever to be faithful and true from this time forward.

CHAPTER IX.

BUSINESS SUCCESS AND POSSIBILITIES.

Fortunately for Mr. Tamden, it was Saturday when he entered upon his new duties, and as the firm of Wide-awake & Co. always closed promptly at 6 o'clock Saturday afternoon he would just have time enough to find out the nature of the duties expected, and be all bright and fresh to begin a full week's work on Monday morning. So promptly at one o'clock he was at the office awaiting orders.

His work, was to be merely making out invoices of goods sent out, and entering them in the books of the company, a very simple operation, yet one requiring considerable care, lest some item should be overlooked or charged twice, or charged to the wrong person. Other duties might call for his attention in future, but he was very thankful that for the present they were so simple. And so it was with a lighter heart and a clearer conscience than he had experienced for some weeks that he arose from his desk

at the hour for closing and surveyed with satisfaction the amount of work so neatly done in that one afternoon. Before leaving, however, the manager, as was customary, glanced rapidly and carefully at the writing and accurate figures of the "new hand," and expressed approval in a few kind, appreciative words, that made the bookkeeper feel as though he had found a new world, and led him to resolve more determinedly than ever to persevere in the way in which he had so lately begun. And now for the first time since he left his mission he could look on his afternoon's work as the only honest endeavor that he had made.

After putting everything properly in its place, he closed his desk, and, taking his hat, sauntered out into the street. He would have liked very much to have gone to the shop where his wife worked, and had an occasional word when there were no customers present, but his better judgment told him that this would not be the wisest thing for him to do, so he took another direction. He wandered down to the wharf, where the shipping had been tied up for the winter, but which was now, under the influence of the sun's rays and the warm April showers, beginning to break from its icy

prison, while from many a sea-going craft there were coming away the boat hands who had been busy cleaning, repairing and fitting up for a summer of service on the broad Atlantic.

The sight of the shipping made him think of home and the old land, and his early life beyond the sea. There passed through his mind the changes that had taken place in his life and surroundings since he had landed on this very same wharf a dozen years ago or more, a poor, lone emigrant boy, with his future to carve out for himself. And how had he accomplished his task? The present narrative is a sufficient answer to the question. Providentially guided and cared for till he was duly qualified for one of the noblest callings that a human being could aspire to, and for a time successful in his work, through his own misguided folly he found himself approaching middle life still a homeless wanderer, with the additional responsibility of providing for wife and children. But instead of being discouraged by such reflections he moved with a more resolute step, as in firm reliance upon Divine grace and help he determined to atone for and, as far as possible, reclaim the past.

For reasons which the reader will have no difficulty in divining he did not attend his

own church on the following Sabbath, but as all the instincts of his newly-regenerated life craved for Christian fellowship of some kind, he found his way to the little Methodist chapel, where the preacher, a scholarly, cultured and godly man preached from the words, "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." And as the speaker enlarged upon his theme, showing what it was to be in Christ—not outward fellowship with the church or compliance with its rules, ritual and usages, but a change of heart, a placing of the affections upon the proper object, things above, and the pure, unselfish, Christ-like life that should follow—like Wesley, he felt his heart strangely warmed, and he felt that even he was a new creature in Christ. And then, with this experience came the inexpressible longing to declare to others his newly-found treasure.

This thought more than any other took possession of him, that he at least must tell his wife. But there was a testimony meeting at the close of the service, and those who had in any way been blessed were invited to remain for a little time and tell what the Lord had done for them. Without questioning the propriety of the act, or even asking what others, especially his old associates, would think of him, should they learn what

had taken place, he made up his mind to remain. He did so, and after two or three had expressed their confidence in God and their trust in Christ as their present Saviour from all sin, he arose to his feet and spoke something as follows :

"Friends and brethren, I came into your midst this morning more with the desire to put in an hour or two of time that seemed to hang heavy on my hands. By training and prejudice I am opposed to such a meeting as this, but I thank God His Spirit and grace have triumphed over these difficulties, and while listening to the earnest messages of to-day I have been enabled in a manner never known to me before, to trust in Christ as my Saviour now, and to realize while so doing that my sins are forgiven and that I indeed am a new creature. With all my heart I praise him for enabling me to bear this, my first testimony, to his saving grace." Before he was quite seated from several in the building there went up the spontaneous outburst of "Praise the Lord," "Glory to God," and many other similar ejaculations. Not wishing to be interrogated he very quietly moved outside as soon as he had given his testimony and hastened to his lodgings.

The dinner bell was just ringing, and as

fortune seemed to plan it he found a seat at a table where his wife was already seated. It required a good deal of self-control on his part, and no doubt on hers as well, to make it appear to the other guests that there was no more than a boarding house acquaintance, but as everyone seemed absorbed in what interested them most there was but very little, if any, notice taken of them. As soon, therefore, as it was evident that none were heeding what they might be talking about he opened the subject by asking her what church she attended. "Why," she replied, "do you think I would attend any but my own? It seems the older I grow the more I admire and love its service. The bishop gave us a very helpful, practical sermon from the text, 'Bodily exercise profiteth little,' etc., and I am sure all hearts must have been touched while he emphasized the blessedness, both here and hereafter, of a life of godliness."

"And I too," said he, "spent a most profitable hour, the best in my life, at the Methodist chapel. Such a warm-hearted, soul-stirring address as I listened to entirely changed my views of the people called Methodists, and my heart was so wonderfully filled that God spake peace to my soul; and so sweet is the experience that I have

longed for an opportunity to tell you, yes, and to tell others, what this Jesus is to me now."

Mrs. Tamden listened to this wonderful recital with unfeigned surprise; and though she was from training and prejudice, like her husband, not much in favor of the Methodists, there was something in his tone and manner, as well as in what he said, that convinced her now as never before, that she could trust him.

This is generally the case when a real work of grace takes place in the heart; it will be manifest in convincing power to the onlooker. While, therefore, she did not approve of his attending the services at the Methodist chapel she had the good sense not to offer any criticism of his course, for, after all, she would rather have him make public profession of Christ among the Methodists than have him live the life he had lived since they were married. And now that he had been so greatly blessed, he was deeply anxious that his wife should go in the evening and hear for herself the preacher whose words had so stirred and helped him. With a great deal of inward misgiving she consented to his proposal, only with this understanding, that they were

not to walk together or sit together while at the meeting.

The evening, therefore, found them both at the little chapel to listen to the preacher whose soul was so fired by the love of God and a holy longing to save the perishing souls of men. His subject was the doctrine of assurance, from the text, "We know that we have passed from death unto life," etc. Right well did the winged arrows of the Holy Spirit find their mark in the deepest fountains of her being, as she listened to the description of the love and joy and peace of the believer. Nor had she listened long before she, too, began to feel an intense desire to know Jesus as her personal Saviour and to realize some of the joy that comes from trusting Him fully; so, as the preacher pictured to his congregation the joy of the believer in the knowledge of sins forgiven, she was led to trust for present pardon, and to her unutterable joy she felt that God for Christ's sake had forgiven her, and His Spirit bore witness with her spirit that she was a child of God, that she had "passed from death unto life," and with this change in her experience there came the same heart-longing to tell someone of her newly-found joy. She could not for the present, however, make up her mind to fol-

low the example of her husband, and make a public declaration of her faith in Christ, but she determined that at all costs she would tell her husband at the first opportunity. And so, when the meeting was over, she spoke to him as they were leaving and told him of the happy experience that had taken possession of her. After expressing his deep gratitude and pleasure at the news he bade her good-night and hastened to his lodgings. The next morning found him at his work at the call of the bell, the first one to greet him on entering the establishment being the manager, who expressed his pleasure at having seen him at the services the day before and at having heard from him so clear a testimony of religious experience, and told him how pleased he was to be able to greet him as a brother in the Master's service.

It should not surprise us, therefore, to know that all through the day, as well as the succeeding days of the week, work should to him seem a delight. When he obtained this position his first thought was for himself. He could be faithful with the hope of advancing his own interests, but now he would do his work well because the love of Christ constrained him. And so without much variation, the week was taken

up with duties such as were described the first afternoon. Each day brought him into closer relationship with the manager, whom he had learned to respect for his gentlemanly, Christian bearing, genuine integrity and business uprightness. Whatever might be the "tricks of trade," they found no place in the transactions of the firm for which he was working.

A month passed thus quietly away without much variety beyond what has been noted. He managed to have conversations with his wife quite often without apparently exciting any suspicion of their real relation to each other, and it was a great satisfaction to both of them to know that they were each growing more steadfast in their faith in Christ and experiencing greater happiness in His service. She was true to her own church, and was spiritually profited by the service as never before, though she was occasionally found where the brighter light had flooded her soul.

At the end of the month she very quietly spoke to Mr. Tamden, telling him she had had a most advantageous offer for her business, which she was inclined to accept, as she was longing to have her own home once more and get her children with her so that

she might live before them this new life upon which she had entered.

"I will get enough," said she, "to pay back to my brothers all that I have had from them, settle all my small bills, and still have about \$300 towards beginning life again. I am to have two weeks in which to decide, and at the same time wind up the business, and as this is the busy, money-making season, it will mean considerable addition to our means."

"I am pleased," replied he, "to learn what you have just told me, and as my engagement is only temporary, I will give the manager notice to look out for another hand, as I intend leaving the city at the end of two weeks. Not," he continued, "that I could not make my way here if I believed that such were the wiser course, but I feel more convinced than ever that it will be better for us in every way to go to some place where neither of us is known, and so start without the prejudice that must meet us here as soon as the facts are known. This conviction is not the result of cowardice on my part, but the deliberate conviction of my better judgment."

With this she was in fullest accord, and so it was arranged that she at once close the bargain with the purchaser, settle her liabil-

ities out of the proceeds, and that he in the meantime notify the firm that his place would be vacant in two weeks, at the same time looking for another situation in some locality where his record would not be known.

The next morning, therefore, when he went back to his work he at once called on the manager and gave him the necessary notice of his intention to leave at the end of two weeks, as he had other plans that would make it inconvenient for him to continue in the service of the firm after that date.

The manager looked at him in surprise, and asked, "Why, are you not satisfied with your work and wages? We were keeping your case in mind, and expected to promote you very soon to a more lucrative position, and I assure you it will be a serious disappointment to the firm to hear of your decision to leave so abruptly. However, I suppose all we can do at present will be to recognize your notice and act accordingly, though I will say here, that if you see fit to change your mind, just let us know, and we will be only too glad to retain you in our service."

Mr. Tamden thanked him for his expressions of kindness and told him that the work was all that he desired, and he was satisfied with his wages, but other rea-

sons, which he was not at liberty to disclose at present, made his decision necessary.

Now, some might think that it would have been wiser for him to have declared what he had been, and in the face of the past endeavored to live in such a way as would have convinced those who knew him of the sincerity of his repentance and his determination to lead a new life. And no doubt if he had had only himself to consider he would not have shrunk from such a course, but when he thought of his wife and children he decided that it would be better to carry out his present purpose.

And so he worked away, attending faithfully to every detail of the duties assigned him, and more than ever, day by day, bringing all his best energies to bear upon the task in hand.

Finally the two weeks had gone by and he was called into the office of the manager and his earnings were handed to him ; as a recognition of his faithfulness and the help that his services had been to their business, they added another \$10 to his income, declaring that he had been a good deal more than that additional advantage to them.

In the meantime his wife concluded

the sale of her business, settled with her brothers and other creditors, told her friends of the return of her husband, of his changed life, and hers as well, and of her consent to live with him again. Of course they remonstrated, but to no purpose, and so they plainly told her that if she should be again deserted, as was likely, she need not look to them for sympathy or help. She replied that she had taken all this into consideration, but as she now believed him sincere she did not hesitate to take the full responsibility of the course she was about to follow.

While Mrs. Tandem had been thus active in arranging her business he had been on the lookout for some opening, and not in vain, for in one of the papers he saw an advertisement for a teacher in one of the high schools in the State of Maine, promising a salary of \$500 per annum. He made application, at the same time sending his certificate of graduation from his Alma Mater; to his surprise, a few days later it was returned to him with the gratifying intelligence that he was accepted, and that his duties would begin at the close of the summer holidays, in about a month from the date of his acceptance, thus giving him

time for getting his family settled in their new home.

The place was a somewhat obscure one, but even that fact had its advantages, the thought of isolation not being contrary to his wishes at present. From further enquiries he had learned that the place to which he was going was a small village near one of the lumbering districts of the state, and that the country all around was sparsely settled, but that the people were enterprising and progressive, making the best of their circumstances, and more anxious for the intellectual than the material advancement of their children.

As they had no encumbrances but their clothing, they concluded it better to start at once for their new home, and so, having learned the route necessary for them to take, on Monday morning the children were brought to the station, where he was already in waiting, with tickets purchased which would ensure them a passage over the Q. & K. R. R. to their new home. To avoid a scene the children were not permitted to see their father till after they had boarded the train, and as he had allowed his beard to grow since he last saw them they would hardly have recognized him anyway.

Mrs. Tamden had bidden her mother good-

bye, and she on parting had put a bank note into her daughter's hand, urging her to accept it, and saying, "It rightly belongs to you as we did not do anything for you at the time of your marriage, your father not approving of your choice. But take it now, you will need a good deal to start house-keeping, and I hope you will not have to repent of this step. I pray that his professed conversion will prove genuine."

The teams that were to convey her goods, and also herself, and children, to the station were all in readiness, so after the usual farewell good-byes and kisses, the rumbling wheels bore them swiftly from scenes that had for them so much of painful suggestion.

According to appointment Mr. Tamden was at the station awaiting her arrival. In a short time trunks were checked, baggage expressed, and to the tune of the clanging bell and the "All aboard" of the conductor, the train moved slowly but with ever increasing speed towards their future destination. Nothing of interest worth noting occurred on the journey. They changed cars twice, at one of the points passed the inspection of the customs officer, and about 3 p. m. of the same day they pulled up at the town of B—, in the State of Maine. There

were a couple of 'buses at the station, the drivers of which both spoke in glowing terms of the accommodations furnished by the houses which they represented; as their representations left them but little if any choice they entered the carriage most convenient, and in a few minutes found themselves at the door of a very comfortable, substantial and tidy-looking building, all the more remarkable to them because of the absence of that rowdy element that is so often seen around the doors and verandahs of country resorts. But it soon occurred to them that they were in a "Prohibition State," and so were mentally forced to admit that at least outward appearances were on the side of prohibition.

As soon as he was assigned to the rooms that were to be their quarters for the present, Mr. Tamden started out with the purpose of first making the acquaintance of the school board by which he had been engaged as teacher and to make enquiries about a house, for it was not their intention to board at an hotel any longer than was really necessary.

At the hotel he got directions how to find the chairman and secretary of the school board, and as the place was not large he soon found himself at the secretary's office,

who, by the way, did a general agency business, and, upon acquaintance proved a very friendly, communicative individual.

As there was no one in the office but the man himself he soon informed him of his identity and of his object in calling on him. "I have brought my wife and family along with me," he remarked, "and so am on hand a little ahead of time that I may have a chance to get settled, look around, and get acquainted with the people and their families before I begin work."

"Well, Mr. Tarnden," said the secretary "(I believe that's your name) I am glad to be able, in the name of our town, and as a representative of the Board of Education in this town, to welcome you as a citizen amongst us, especially when I consider the high and honorable position you are to fill while you reside in our midst. I am one of those men who regard the teaching profession as one of the most important to which any person can turn his attention. I think you will like the place and people well, and if you are fairly successful I believe there will be no difficulty in your getting along with the people. The salary is not large for a man with a family, but living is cheap in this town. Everything you need can be had

at as low a figure as at any place of its size in the country."

"I am pleased, Mr. Secretary," the caller replied, "to hear you speak in the manner in which you do. I thought you could give me some directions about a house, which, as you may know, is one of the first considerations for a man with a family. As we have only three children and will likely get along without a servant, and do not expect a great deal of company, the house need not be very large, say parlor, dining-room and small kitchen downstairs, and three bedrooms upstairs. With something like that we could get along nicely."

"Well, Mr. Tamden," he said, "I think I can suit you. I have a little house that comes as near what you ask for as anything you could find, and is only a few minutes' walk from the schoolhouse, and, as this is a slack afternoon, if you say so, I will lock up for a half-hour and take you over to see it. It was built for an old couple, you see, and so was made very comfortable and convenient, but I will not say anything more about it, as it is only a few blocks away, and you can see for yourself."

So they did as suggested and were soon at the front door of a very neat-looking brick cottage, with well-kept garden and

grounds. They opened the door and passed inside, there to find things even more attractive than outside appearances would indicate, heated by furnace, folding doors between parlor and dining-room, bay windows at street side of parlor, good water supply, and all other conveniences. So Mr. Tamden decided that if the rent was not too high he would look no further.

"Well, Mr. Tamden, what do you think of it?" asked the secretary.

"Fine!" ejaculated the other, "if the rent is only reasonable. I have lately passed through severe financial reverses, and so have to make the most of what I earn until I get a little ahead."

"How would \$5 per month suit your means?" was the owner's next question.

"You are more reasonable than I expected," he replied. "But when would you want your rent?" he added.

"Oh, that is immaterial. If it would suit you I can take it each month when you get your salary, as we pay by the month. But do not feel under any obligation to take it because it is my house. If you think the rent too high I will introduce you to a friend who has a cheaper house, though, of course, not the comforts or conveniences that this one has. I can rent this house any

time I wish ; in fact there have been two applicants already, and I have only had possession about a week, so you see it will be all the same to me whether you take it or not."

"Oh," said Mr. Tamden, "I have no thought of looking any further, and, if you agree, we will say it's a bargain, and I will look around a little for some furniture to begin housekeeping."

And so the bargain was concluded, he signing an agreement to pay monthly the amount stated as rent, and to put in repair any damage that might occur to the property during his occupancy through his neglect or carelessness, reasonable wear and tear excepted. How his heart palpitated at the thought of so soon being settled in what he might practically call his own home ! As he thought of his past life, and how undeserving he was of all the mercies he was receiving, he inwardly resolved that his future should, so far as possible, atone for the sins of the past.

Hastening to his wife he in a most animated manner told her of his success. Thereupon they decided to rest for the remainder of the day, the next morning attend to the furnishing and, as soon as convenient, move in.

With the work of the next few days I will not take up much of the reader's time. It may suffice to say that by a careful attention to what they actually needed, and by avoiding anything merely for the sake of ornament, they were able to furnish respectably and comfortably what was necessary for their present requirements. Before a week they had moved in and had settled down to the everyday routine of house-keeping.

The first day in their new home they decided to establish family worship. True, they had had their morning and evening prayer when he was on his mission, but it had been for the most part formal; now, with their new experience, it would have a new meaning and carry an added strength and helpfulness which it did not give before.

As the Sabbath drew near Mr. Tamden began to enquire as to church privileges, and was informed that while there were several sects represented in the town, the Methodists were the most influential, his own church scarcely being able to claim an existence, as its members only held service in a hall occasionally. This led the newcomers to decide that, all things considered, it would be better for them to attend the Methodist meetings, especially when they remembered the

help these services had been to them spiritually.

In coming to this decision they had no intention of leaving their own church, as they were still greatly attached to the communion in which they had spent their lives. As far as Mr. Tamden himself was concerned he was not regarded by his old associates as having any place among them, so was at full liberty to unite with any people with whom he could get good and be helpful to. He had learned of late, however, that it is not the church that makes the man or determines Christian principles of individuals.

And so they decided that without formally uniting they would make the Methodist church their home, and, as far as possible, help along with its work. They were thus fairly well settled, and already had begun to feel at home in their new surroundings; as they were dignified in their bearing and somewhat reserved in their conduct towards others, though not to the degree of being offensive, they were not troubled with any criticisms as to their past history. They came to this decision, however, that should it be brought to the notice of the people, they would at least be honest, while revealing no more than might be prudent.

But time will pass by in spite of our

plans or wishes ; and Mr. Tamden's case was no exception to the ordinary experience. His short vacation was at an end, and on Monday morning he found himself in the schoolroom, where he expected to spend the greater part of one year at least, seeking to impart useful knowledge to the youth of that community. He entered upon his work with a deep sense of the responsibility resting upon him, more so by far than when he began his work as a Christian minister. He felt the new life implanted within him at the meeting in the Methodist chapel growing and influencing him more,—in fact, he realized that he was being dominated by it. And as he on that first morning looked over the countenances of his future pupils he was irresistibly drawn towards them and became conscious of a deep inner longing that he might be the means of helping them heavenward. As never before a consciousness of unselfishness dawned upon his perception, and he purposed in his heart to be true to duty, both in his agreement with the trustees of the school and with the spiritual interests of his pupils.

Having got fairly started in his new mode of life, and realizing how much success depended on his faithfulness and attention to the details of his work, he set himself dili-

gently from the first to understand his pupils and, as far as possible, deal with each one as his individual case required. It was not long, therefore, before an affectionate confidence was established between him and his scholars, which soon ripened into a friendly intimacy, and proved a great help to him in his work of teaching. It is true he found occasionally an incorrigible among the boys who tested his patience to the utmost, but he persevered, looking above for help, and cheered by the assurance that his Father which is in heaven approved his conduct and by His grace helped him do what was right. His home life also was happier and more cheerful than he had ever hoped it would have been, considering the provocation he had given to make it otherwise.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

Having thus become settled in his new home, and being encouraged by the success attending his work as teacher ; under the influence of divine love, to which heretofore he had lived a stranger, there was awakened in him a strong desire to engage to some extent at least in the vocation which he formerly chose merely as a profession. He still had an intense longing to preach, and as he had a good deal of time in which to prepare for such work without slighting his duties, he began to enquire for some neglected neighborhood where he might put his talents, education and zeal to some practical use. Nor had he long to wait. In conversation with a brother teacher from the country he learned that in the neighborhood where he taught there was quite a large community who were altogether neglected as far as the Gospel was concerned ; they attended no place of worship, nor were they ever visited by a minister of Christ, ex-

cept a wedding or funeral required his services. The friend readily fell in with his proposal to announce an appointment for him the next Sunday afternoon, and promised to do all in his power to secure a congregation.

It was with no small degree of interest that his prospective congregation waited for his coming and wondered what kind of a person he might be, and a great many questions were asked as to his denomination, appearance, and manner of life. Nor was the preacher less curious than the congregation; he was certainly more anxious than they could possibly be as to what would be the effects of his preaching, and how he could prepare himself, not that he might be lifted up, as was largely the case in his former ministry, but that Christ might be so exalted that sinners would be induced to lead a new life. It is needless to say that the people were more than pleased as he, with cultivated intellect and consecrated heart, declared to them the saving truths of the Gospel. And his work was all the more acceptable because on his part it was wholly a labor of love. Without remuneration or hope of reward from them he went on month after month in his self-denying task, being more

than repaid by the earnest attention given to the Word, and the evident improvement in the life and morals of those who attended the services.

And here we drop the curtain, trusting that the principal actor in the drama we have just described may long live to overcome some of the evil effects of his former life.

A few words regarding the doctor who, though subordinate in the main, was no insignificant personage in the life history just concluded. The reader will remember how he disappeared on the evening of his wedding, never again to be seen in the village where for the last few years he had been such a conspicuous figure.

After several years of absence his wife started off to join him, and a few months after reaching her destination sent word back to her friends that the doctor had died. As proof she sent his photograph, taken, it was said, after his death. With this confirmation she claimed from the insurance company the amount of his policy, which, it seems, he had kept regularly paid up.

Some of the sceptical doubted whether he was really dead, claiming that as he always had a deathly appearance, even when in his

best health, and as his moral principles were not of the highest order, he was probably only trying to work a game in order to get possession of the insurance. Be this as it may, after this they dropped out of sight, and have not been heard of since. Whether the insurance company paid over the amount of the policy or not no one ever seemed to find out, therefore let us charitably hope that the claim was no game of fraud, but that he had really gone "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest."